

Genrikh Volkov

BIRTH OF A GENIUS

*The Development
of the Personality
and
World Outlook
of Karl Marx*

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World Outlook
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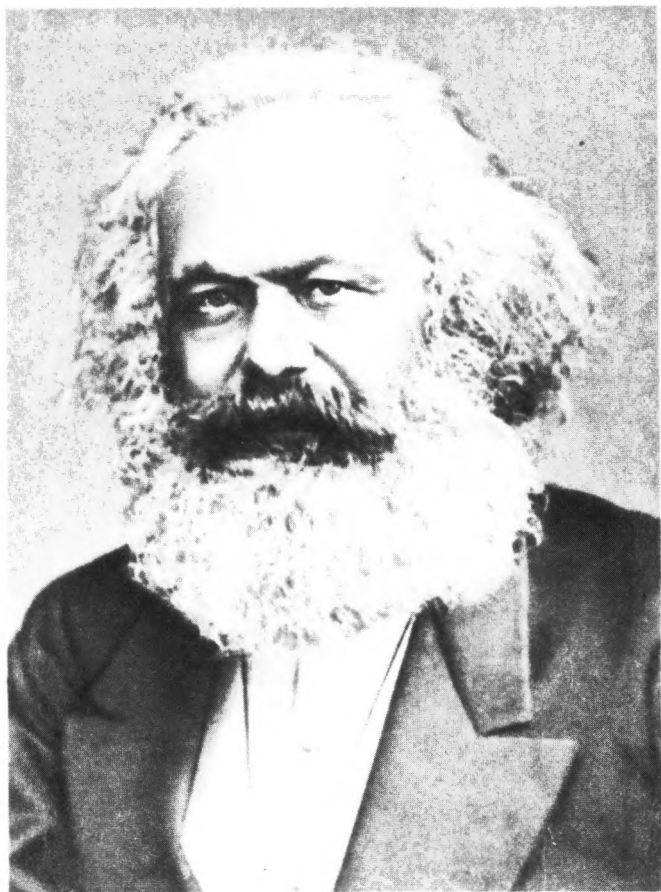
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*You can become a
Communist only when
you enrich your mind
with a knowledge of all
the treasures created by
mankind.*

Lenin



CONTENTS

To My Young Reader 7 ✓

I

In the Fetters of "Torpid Lethargy" 12 ✓

II

The Search for a Vocation 29 ✓

III

A "Fury of Irony" and a "Striving for Poetic Fire" 41 ✓

IV

"In simple words, I hate the pack of gods" 59 ✓

V

"There could be no headway without philosophy" 80 ✓

VI

"Merciless criticism of reality" 102

VII

In Search of a True Battle Slogan 124

VIII

Communism as Completed Humanism 145

IX

A Genius and His Environment 171

X

Next to Genius—Another Genius 200

XI

The Philosophy of *Capital* 217

Conclusion 236



Karl Marx as a student.
Drawing by I. Grinstein

To My Young Reader

One hundred and sixty years have now passed since the birth of Karl Marx.

During this time the world has undergone profound changes—scientific and technological, socio-economic, political and ideological. As we know, the pace of social progress is accelerating, and therefore the world has probably changed just as much in the last hundred years as it did in the preceding millennium.

But the remarkable thing is that the further mankind advances from the age in which Marx lived, the “closer”, one might say, it draws to Marxism, and the more widely the ideas of scientific communism are disseminated and recognised.

In 1867 *Capital* was published in German in an edition of one thousand copies. Today Marx's books are published and republished in editions of many millions each year all over the world.

Contrary to the allegations of capitalist ideologists that Marxist ideas are obsolete, these ideas are gaining

more and more ardent supporters and becoming an increasingly powerful real force which is transforming the world.

Marx has, perhaps, never been so "modern" as in our age of great social upheavals. For today it is becoming increasingly clear how far he saw into the future.

In the desire to understand its past and present, to grasp the future, each new generation is turning to the legacy of Marxism and discovering new horizons in it.

The book in your hands is not a biography of Karl Marx or a popular exposition of Marxist theory. It is intended as a kind of "introduction" to Marxism, an account of the emergence and development of this great doctrine which, more than any other, has influenced the destiny of mankind.

The author of this book has sought to draw the reader with him into the world of the quests, thoughts and passions of the young Marx, into the creative laboratory where his fiery ideas were evolved out, to encourage the reader to immerse himself in this world, for nothing enriches us more than spiritual communion—albeit mediated—with a genius, than following the path of his quests.

It is a well-known fact that Marxism is not a dogma, but a guide to action. It follows, therefore, that Marxism should be studied in its development, in motion, in action, and not as a collection of "ready-made" truths which need only be learnt by heart and trotted out parrot-fashion.

How are we to reach the very heart of Marxism, appreciate what it contributed to our understanding of the world and what distinguishes it from earlier philosophical and socio-economic doctrines? To do this we must ourselves follow in thought the path which the classics of Marxism trod. To do this it is

essential that we ourselves "repeat" and experience the exertions of creative thought which led to the new world outlook and, above all, that we master and reshape critically the legacy of human culture which served as the source of Marxism. To do this we must acquire the ability to apply Marxism in theory and practice.

This is very difficult, of course, and requires great expenditure of energy, effort and time, but "there is no royal road to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits"¹.

Easier paths generally lead to the oversimplification and vulgarisation of Marxism. They produce dogmatists, on the one hand, and "disillusion" on the other. This is what Lenin had in mind in his famous speech to the Third Congress of the Young Communist League, when he warned against an "oversimplified" study of Marxism (communism) with the help of the ready-made conclusions and slogans contained in textbooks and popular brochures.

Marx himself "reconsidered, subjected to criticism, and verified on the working-class movement everything that human thinking had created, and therefrom formulated conclusions which people hemmed in by bourgeois limitations or bound by bourgeois prejudices could not draw."²

If we wish to know by which path Marx arrived at Marxism, and how one of the greatest achievements of human genius became possible, if we wish to grasp this in order to understand Marxism in the very process of its conception, in the making, we naturally turn first to Marx's early works, to the early period of

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1977, p. 30.

² V.I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 287.

his life and activity.

Why was it Marx who brought about a revolution in philosophy as a result of which mankind acquired "new eyes" and new horizons opened up before it? What personal, human qualities were needed for this? Clearly these questions are of more than secondary importance for those who wish to follow Marx's philosophy and life.

If it is true that a man is what he does, this is even truer with regard to Marx, for he was a remarkably single-minded and purposeful individual.

Marx's personality formed as his revolutionary philosophy took shape and developed. An analysis of his works is the best key to the innermost recesses of his spiritual laboratory, to the unveiling of his moral character as a scholar, revolutionary and citizen. In this book, therefore, the development of Marx's personality and the development of Marxism are seen as a single process.

This work concentrates primarily on a comparatively short period in the life of the founder of scientific communism—the period from 1835 to 1844, that is, from the time he left school to the first works in which the transition to materialism and scientific communism becomes a fact.

Ten years in a man's life may not seem to be so important. Yet during this time the former gymnasium pupil from a petty-bourgeois family reached the heights of spiritual development, far outstripping his age and his contemporaries.

I have not sought to give a detailed or full picture of the spiritual development of the young Marx. For the purpose of this short work it is sufficient to dwell only on the main lines along which his personality and world outlook developed. The aim is not so much to expound and comment upon the content of Marx's works, as to arouse the reader's interest in them and

encourage him to think and enquire for himself.

The young reader will probably encounter here names, terms and problems with which he is unfamiliar, and will probably not understand everything immediately. Much will make him ponder and much will provoke questions and the desire to study them more closely. The references to primary sources, to books which can provide further food for thought, are intended as a guide for independent examination of the realm to which the problems raised here belong.

And if, after this book, the reader wishes to delve more deeply into the realm of Marx's ideas, if, following Marx, he too turns to the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Fichte, Hegel and Feuerbach, to the works of Saint-Simon and Fourier, Ricardo, and to the writings of Shakespeare and Balzac, Goethe and Heine, he will be well on the way to an understanding of how Marxism arose and what it constitutes.

Why have we mentioned belles lettres as well? The fact is that not only philosophical and socio-economic, but also aesthetic premises played an important part in the development of Marxism. For the young Marx the world of freedom-loving art was the first school for his convictions. It was art that made him adopt a critical attitude towards reality and condemn smug, complacent philistinism. The development of Marx's artistic consciousness merged with the development of his political consciousness. His criticism of philistinism became criticism of the foundation of the society which engendered it.

Marx's passionate interest in art, the early formation of his aesthetic tastes, and his own experiments in poetry and prose—all this later had a most beneficial effect on his writings, which combined profound scientific thought with a brilliant artistic form of exposition.

I

In the Fetters of "Torpid Lethargy"

It is true that the old world belongs to the philistine. But one should not treat the latter as a bugbear from which to recoil in fear. On the contrary, we ought to keep an eye on him. It is worth while to study this lord of the world.

KARL MARX¹

Yes, it is worth taking a look at the philistine's world, if only for the fact that it was the struggle with this world which sharpened and developed the talent of Marx himself, his personality as a fighter, thinker and revolutionary. It is worth giving at least a thumbnail sketch of it to show more clearly the background against which Marx's genius flowered.

German philistinism is famous for having been pilloried by the scathing irony of Heine and the deadly sarcasm of Marx and Engels. Nothing was so repellent to Marx as self-complacent philistinism, in whatever field or form it appeared: in personal relations, everyday life, science, poetry, politics or the practice of the revolutionary struggle.

However, philistinism is by no means only a national invention. It is the natural product of petty-bourgeois self-complacency, sanctimonious religious

¹ Karl Marx, "Letters from the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1975, p. 134.

morality, and the servile psychology of the former lackey who has stayed a lackey at heart. It is the inevitable fruit of a social system which practices the merciless exploitation of man by man under the "humane" slogan of "freedom, equality and fraternity", which makes people slaves of the moneybag and calls this the greatest "achievement" of mankind.

Philistinism developed in the various countries in accordance with historical conditions and national character. German philistinism also had its own inimitable flavour—and there were special reasons for this.

The "Holy Roman Empire of the German nation", as it was so pompously called then, consisted at the beginning of the 19th century of several hundred "sovereign" states, ranging from quite large ones (such as Prussia and Austria) to the smallest kingdoms, electorates, principalities, dukedoms, baronies and free Imperial cities. They all possessed a considerable degree of political independence and were subject only to the power of the Emperor and the Diet—a power which was sometimes most illusory. As a result civil strife, confusions and great disorder reigned throughout.

Every little prince was an arbitrary despot to his subjects. Power at court was in the hands of ministers and government officials who, as Frederick Engels describes it, enjoyed complete freedom of action and complete impunity, provided only that they filled their master's treasury and procured him enough female beauty for his "harem".

The money-grubbing philistines, the bourgeois, accepted the fact that they were oppressed and insulted, in the belief that it was easier to fish in muddy water, and managed to find inexhaustible sources of wealth in the constant social disorder. United with

the people they would have been able to overthrow the old power and transform the empire, as the English bourgeoisie had to some extent done between 1640 and 1688, and as was happening in France at that time.

The German middle classes, however, had not that energy, and never pretended to that courage. "Peasantry, tradesmen and manufacturers felt the double pressure of a blood-sucking government and bad trade; the nobility and princes found that their incomes, in spite of the squeezing of their inferiors, could not be made to keep pace with their increasing expenditure; everything was wrong, and a general uneasiness prevailed throughout the country. No education, no means of operating upon the minds of the masses, no free press, no public spirit, not even an extended commerce with other countries—nothing but meanness and selfishness—a mean, sneaking, miserable shopkeeping spirit pervading the whole people."¹

This picture is very similar to the "sickness of the realm" which the Chancellor reports to his Emperor in Goethe's *Faust*, complaining that all around there is misery and suffering, one evil begetting another:

Who looks abroad from off this height supreme
Throughout the realm, 't is like a weary dream,
Where one deformity another mouldeth,
Where lawlessness itself by law upholdeth,
And 't is an age of Error that unfoldeth! ...

At last, the man of good intent
To flatterer and briber bendeth;
The judge, debarred from punishment,
Mates with the felon, 'ere he endeth.

¹ Frederick Engels, "The State of Germany". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, Moscow, 1976, p. 17.

I've painted black, but denser screen
I'd rather draw before the scene.¹

Then all at once, like a thunderbolt, the French Revolution struck into this realm of heavy somnolence and stagnant miasma. The despair and hopelessness gave way to a universal enthusiasm. The liberal German bourgeois even ventured to take "wildly Frondist" actions: they gave rousing renderings of the *Marseillaise* in wine cellars and sent messages of greeting to the French National Assembly. German poets sang the praises of the French people in unison. And Jacobin supporters appeared in Germany, urging revolution.

But the intoxication with the thunderstorm from the West was short-lived. The Jacobin terror horrified the German bourgeoisie. The respectable philistines, who had begun to dream of freedom of private enterprise and of equality and fraternity with the dukes and counts, now heard the tidings from France with cowardly shudders and anger. The recently ardent friends of the Revolution were becoming its bitter and fanatical enemies.

And then Napoleon invaded the German lands with his armies. Objectively he was for Germany a representative of the Revolution, because he spread its principles. Sweeping away the old feudal customs, he established his own—undoubtedly more progressive—code of laws, destroyed the rotten Empire and reduced the number of small states by forming larger ones.

Nevertheless the Germans did not feel particularly grateful to Napoleon. This was understandable: their

¹ J.W. Goethe, *Faust*, Vol. II. The Second Part, Boston and New York, 1871, pp. 10-11. Translated by Bayard Taylor.

national pride had been hurt by the disgrace of many years of military defeats, and by the fact that the "usurper" with one kick of his boot had done away with the decayed accessories of feudalism so dear to the philistine's heart. The German philistine would rather have died than stop rendering allegiance to his master.

After Napoleon's defeat Germany acquired the long-awaited opportunity of returning to the state of "torpid lethargy" from which it had been so rudely aroused. Reaction reigned triumphant everywhere. One of the German electors even went so far as to restore the pigtails of his soldiers which had been cut off by the impious hands of the French.

There were also some supporters of progress even among the monarchs. Thus, the King of Württemberg decided to present his subjects with a constitution which provided for the creation of a parliament. To this end he called together representatives of the estates. But then something took place which could only have happened in Germany. The representatives of the estates rejected the monarch's liberal advances and demanded the restoration of the "good old laws". Just as in Heine's *The Emperor of China*.

The noble Manchoos exclaim, when freed
From the presence of revolution:
"The bastinado is all that we need,
We want no constitution!"¹

Could any even remotely radical political movement emerge in such conditions? Could there be any hope that the people would intervene in the fate of their country, express their will freely?

The German bourgeoisie placed all its hopes in the Prussian monarchy, seeing it as the only force capable

¹ The Poems of Heine, London, 1878, p. 175. Translated by Edgar Alfred Bowring, C.B.

of achieving economic and political concentration in the country. In the prevailing intestine feuds and fragmentation the ideal of a united bourgeois state became a fetish of national aspirations and hopes for the German philistine. "This position of the state explains both the conscientiousness of the civil servant, which is found nowhere else, and all the illusions about the state which are current in Germany."¹

The German philistine was not content with servility to the powers that be. He was also servile to God, whom he "carried in his heart". Germany was the birthplace of the Reformation and Protestantism, and the spirit of religious piety, which demanded "moral purity" and love of God, was particularly strong there.

The legitimate scion of slavery (in all its forms) and religion with its sanctimonious morality, its code of moral fetters, the philistine bears on his narrow brow the stamp of both parents. He was to be found in many roles. He could be master or servant, an ordinary ragman or a vendor of cheap ideas. In all cases he is remarkable for his grovelling and subservience to his superior—be it employer, king or God. This servility, developed and hardened over the centuries, becomes an inner, unconscious requirement for the philistine, his psychology, his spiritual world. His thoughts and feelings are blinkered by dogmas, he carries fetters in his heart and head, and so respects them. He cannot conceive of his life without certain canons, without circulars and instructions from above. He feels uncomfortable when faced with the need to take independent action. Given freedom of choice, he would never choose freedom.

The Prussian philistine of that day loved dis-

¹ Marx, Engels, "The German Ideology". *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, Moscow, 1976, p. 195.

cipline. Trained in "His Majesty's" barracks—both military and spiritual—the philistine readily accepted the discipline of the rod and sincerely believed that the whole world depended on it. He felt a truly "dog-like" affection for the stick and was ready, as proof of devotion to his master, to bite the throat of anyone who laid hands on it. He himself willingly performed the role of the disciplinal stick, chastising "trouble-makers".

The philistine is so intoxicated with his own piety, with the irreproachable "morality" of his behaviour, that he regards it as his sacred duty to "preach morality" to all and sundry, to set them all on the right path. He regards as a virtue ignorance of everything that does not help a person live in comfort.

Marx describes a portrait of one of them as follows: "Yesterday *Hasse* came from Greifswald, in regard to whom the only thing I have admired is his enormous top-boots, like those of a village priest. He spoke, too, just like the top-boot of a village priest, he knew nothing about anything, is preparing to publish a book in several volumes about the boring Anselm of Canterbury, on which he has been working for ten years. He thinks that the present critical trend is a moment which must be overcome. He speaks of religiosity as a product of life experience, by which he probably means his successful rearing of children and his fat belly, for fat bellies undergo all sorts of experiences and, as Kant says: if it goes behind it becomes an F., if it goes upwards it becomes religious inspiration. What a man this pious *Hasse* is with his religious constipation!"¹

Philistines of the *Hasse* type are fond of making high-flown speeches and are not averse to passing off

¹ Karl Marx, "To Arnold Ruge, April 27, 1842". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1975, pp. 387-88.

the world of their base and limited needs as needs of the "head and heart". Nor are they averse to posing as fighters, while always remaining, incidentally, fighters not "to the death", but "for the stomach".

In passing off their starry-eyed lechery of thought as romantic wandering in search of truth, they seek to pose as thinkers, but usually get no further than "Divine Providence". They refine their dullness in the impasses of hackneyed, trivial banalities and "edifying" idle chatter.

Marx christened the English moralist Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) the "father of the philistines"—that soberly pedantic and tediously garrulous oracle of bourgeois reason of the 19th century, that "genius in the way of bourgeois stupidity".¹ With "naïve obtuseness" Bentham proclaimed the philistine, who regards his own egoistic interest as the measure of all that is "useful" in society, as the model man.

"Bentham is among philosophers what Martin Tupper is among poets,"² Marx notes in *Capital*. In the middle of the last century Tupper enjoyed enormous popularity in English philistine circles, who found the pretentious vulgarity and sham profundity of his verse to their taste. In his *Confessions*, a questionnaire from his elder daughters in 1865, in reply to the question "Your aversion" Marx wrote "Martin Tupper".³ From the whole pack of quill-drivers, dirty political intriguers and talentless braggarts who persecuted Marx cruelly throughout his life, he unerringly chose one name—the name of a man with whom he had had no personal dealings, but who was in Marx's

¹ K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 571.

² Ibid.

³ *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, Moscow, 1957, p. 266.

eyes the embodiment of cheap success which panders to the base tastes of the philistine, the embodiment of literary philistinism.

Such a philistine "theoretician" worships all that is "lofty, romantic, ideal", and despises "crude materialism". By the word materialism the philistine understands gluttony, drunkenness, lust, the delights of the flesh, vanity, cupidity, miserliness, greed, the pursuit of profit and stock exchange swindles—in short, all the filthy vices in which he himself secretly indulges. By the word "idealism", he understood the belief in virtue, universal philanthropy and in a general way a "better world", of which he boasts before others but in which he himself at the utmost believes only so long as he is having the blues or is going through the bankruptcy consequent upon his customary "materialist" excesses. And then he sings his favourite song: "What is man?—Half beast, half angel".¹

Was it perhaps this song of the philistine which Heinrich Heine had in mind when he wrote:

I am not bad, I am not good,
Am neither quick nor slow;
If I went forward yesterday,
Today I'll backward go;

An obscurantist full of light,
And neither mare nor horse,
Both Sophocles and Canute are
My inspiration's source.²

Oh, they are very sentimental, these ardent lovers of "Sophocles and Canute"! "The same philistine

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1976, p. 353.

² *The Works of Heinrich Heine, New Poems*, Vol. X, London, 1904, p. 189. Translated by Margaret Armour.

meanness that sees nothing in the proletarian but a disgusting, corrupt ragamuffin and which rubs its hands with satisfaction at the Paris massacres in June 1848, when more than 3,000 of those 'ragamuffins' were butchered—that same meanness is indignant at the raillery of which sentimental societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals are the object.”¹

Philistinism has many faces, of course. It may also assume refined, cultivated forms in which it is not easily recognisable. It follows the fashion and changes its dress with each new age.

At the beginning of the 19th century philistinism was firmly implanted in all the pores of German society: it had infected science, poetry and politics.

Philistine Germany, however, was not the whole of Germany, of course. There also existed the Germany of the emergent proletariat, of the “Silesian Weavers” who wove “a curse to the false Fatherland” (Heine). There existed the Germany of Lessing, Goethe, Kant, Fichte and Hegel. But even such giants of the spirit as Goethe and Hegel, who towered high above their age, above the philistine morass, caught their feet in it from time to time. Yet those who had begun a “new” song about making a heaven on earth pinned their hopes on them.

By the 1840s, that is, by the time when Marx and Engels appeared on the arena of social activity, Germany was beginning to emerge from its “torpid lethargy”. It was pregnant with revolution, and German classical philosophy served as a kind of theoretical preparation for it.

If, as Heine so aptly remarked, the laughter of

¹ “Reviews from the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung. Politisch-Ökonomische Revue* No. 2”. Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*. Vol. 10. Moscow, 1978, p. 242.

Voltaire had to ring out before the guillotine fell on the king's head, if the ideas of Montesquieu, Rousseau and Diderot, which brought about a revolution in French social consciousness, preceded the political revolution in the country at the end of the 18th century, in the same way the gloomy Mephistophelean smile of Goethe and the ponderous theoretical constructions of Kant and Hegel proclaimed to the world the approaching revolution in Germany.

The philosophy of Kant was nourished, on the one hand, by the ideas of the French Revolution, and on the other, by the achievements of the natural sciences of that day. His encyclopaedic mind sought to embrace the whole universe, to provide answers to all the questions posed by preceding thought: from astronomy and mathematics to ethics and aesthetics.

Following Rousseau Kant announced that man was the end-in-itself of social development and not a means of attaining other ends. Against the struggle of egoistic, appropriatorial interests he set the supreme requirement of moral duty: behave as everyone should behave in accordance with the dictates of reason. He developed the ideas of the sovereignty of the people's power and the equality of all in law.

Kant made man's reason, his ability to understand and create, the central object of philosophical enquiry. From the fetters of the authoritarian religious system of thought he released the demon of doubt-doubt in the finality and absoluteness of "God-given" truths, doubt in our ability to ever achieve full and exhaustive knowledge. To incognisable "things-in-themselves" Kant ascribed God also, thereby laying the foundation for the philosophical criticism of religion in Germany.

It would, however, be hard to accuse Kant of excessive boldness and faultless consistency of thought. Alas. He was not a born revolutionary even

in the field of theory. In taking a step forward, he always looked back. He sought to usher the brilliant ideas, inspired by the French Revolution and the revolution in the natural sciences, into German philosophy secretly, through the "back door", to present them in such a form that they would not shock the narrow-minded German philistine. He managed in a most incredible way to combine in himself the bourgeois liberal and the monarchist, the sceptic and the rationalist, the materialist and the idealist, the atheist and the refined defender of religion.

In his ironical criticism of Kant's limitations, half-heartedness, and cautiousness, Heine compared this "destroyer in the realm of thought" with the leader of the French Jacobins, Maximilien Robespierre, whose very name was enough to strike terror in the French nobility. Nevertheless Heine discovers that they share something in common. It is, first and foremost, the same inexorable, uncompromising, prosaic, sober integrity. In addition both possess the "talent for distrust", the only difference being that the one applied it to ideas and called it criticism, while the other applied it to men and entitled it republican virtue. And finally, "Evident in both to the highest degree, however was the pattern of philistinism—nature had meant them to weigh out coffee and sugar but destiny determined that they should weigh other things, placing for one a King, and for the other a God, on the scales..."¹

If this is perhaps too strong with regard to Robespierre, it hits the nail right on the head with Kant, who holds the "death sentence" for God in one hand, while clutching "a pardon" in the other.

Heine gives an amusing description of the fol-

¹ Heinrich Heine, *Works of Prose*, New York, 1943, p. 198. Translated by E.B. Ashton.

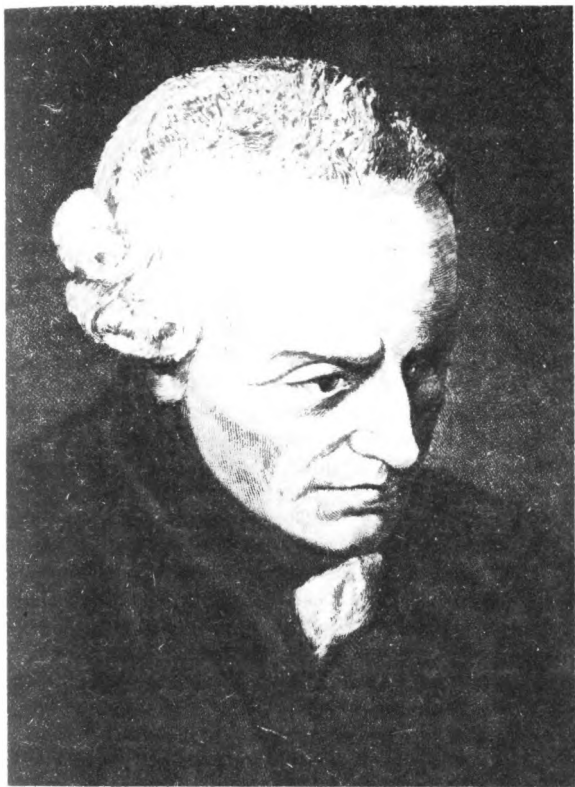
lowing scene in which after the tragedy comes the farce. At first Immanuel Kant acts the pitiless philosopher, storming heaven, putting the entire garrison to the sword and refuting all arguments for the existence of God, and the overlord of the world, now disproved, is swimming in his own blood. There is now no Allmercy any more, no paternal kindness, no reward in another world for self-denial in this one; the immortality of the soul is in its last agony—gasping and groaning. And Kant's faithful servant, old Lampe, who carried the professor's umbrella after him all his life, watches all this in horror with cold sweat and tears dripping from his face.

Then Immanuel Kant takes pity and shows that he is not only a great philosopher, but also a kind man. He ponders and speaks, half good-heartedly and half ironically: "Old Lampe must have a God, or the poor man cannot be happy—but man ought to be happy on earth—that is according to practical reason; all right, let practical reason warrant God's existence."¹

Although the philistine in Kant gained the upper hand, even in his philosophical conclusions, the spirit of criticism contained in his writings aroused a great intellectual ferment in Germany, a ferment which culminated in the philosophy of Fichte, Schelling and particularly of Hegel.

Hegel brought the philosophical revolution started by Kant to its logical conclusion. The critical force of the theoretical thought in his writings acquired a powerful weapon with the help of the dialectical method developed by him. Hegelian dialectics firmly disproved the idea that any theoretical dogma is absolute and indestructible and, at the same time, the idea that any social order is indestructible and eternal. Describing the dialectical philosophy developed by

¹ Heinrich Heine, *Works of Prose*, p. 200.



Immanuel Kant

Hegel, Engels noted that for it nothing was final, sacred. "It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything."¹

Hegel's famous thesis that "everything that is real is rational; and all that is rational is real" could also be interpreted in the sense that everything real in the sphere of human history becomes irrational with time and is consequently liable to be destroyed by revolution.

Heinrich Heine, who was not only a great poet but also a profound philosopher, and studied philosophy under Hegel himself, described how he "stood behind the maestro" while the latter was composing the music of his dialectical constructions.

"True, he wrote it down in very unclear and mannered signs, so that not everyone could decipher it – sometimes I saw him look round anxiously, for fear that someone might understand him. He was very fond of me, for he was sure that I would not betray him; I even thought him servile at that time. One day when I objected to the words 'everything that is real is rational', he laughed strangely and remarked: 'It could also mean that all that is rational must be real.' He looked round hastily, but soon calmed down for only Heinrich Beer had heard what he said. It was only later that I understood these figures of speech. And only later did I understand why he asserted in the philosophy of history that Christianity was progressive because it preached a god who was dead, whereas the heathen gods knew nothing of death. What progress it is, therefore, if God has not existed at all! ..."²

¹ Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy". Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 339.

² *Gedichte und Gedanken von Heinrich Heine*. Aus dem Nachlasse des Dichters. Hamburg, 1875, S. 257-58.

Hegel could have exclaimed like Mephistopheles in Faust: "I am the spirit that evermore denies, and rightly so—for all that doth arise deserves to perish."

Hegel himself, however, was far from drawing world-shattering "Mephistophelean" conclusions from his dialectics. He was too much of a respectable citizen and loyal servant of the Prussian king.

Like Kant, Hegel remained a philistine in science. He unsheathed the sword of dialectics only to conceal it straight away in the rusty scabbard of his system, raise the scabbard to his lips, and bow his knee "chivalrously", and also his grey head bearing the famous night cap, to his sovereign—Friedrich Wilhelm III, for which he received the title of official philosopher.

In order to create from the legacy of German classical philosophy the "algebra of revolution" in the true meaning of these words, other heads, other characters were needed. People who were free from all the philistine fetters of the old society, who towered high above their time, people who would not be afraid of the results of their own thinking and would put them fearlessly into action, people for whom fidelity to learning and devotion to the revolution were the only loyalties.

Great people appear where and when the conditions are ripe for their great actions. In the year of Hegel's death a boy of thirteen called Karl Marx was studying at the gymnasium in Trier, and not far from this town—in Barmen—lived the eleven-year-old Frederick Engels.

They were both native Rhinelanders. Was this purely coincidence?

The Rhineland was under the influence of two great cultures—German and French. In Napoleon's time it even became part of France. Unlike the rest of Germany feudal customs had been completely destroyed here.

But all the stronger was the disappointment of the Rhinelanders when they came under the rule of backward Prussian despotism. The contrast was too striking! It was only natural that in the Rhineland even a few state officials flaunted liberalism and radicalism.

The thunder of the revolutionary storms shaking neighbouring France was most clearly heard in the Rhineland. A stream of ideas of French materialism and enlightenment passed through it into Germany. Here more naturally than anywhere else the ideas of German classical philosophy clashed with those of utopian socialism (particularly of Saint-Simon). Here the spirit of the witty, gay, sarcastic art of their neighbours had an invigorating influence on the thoughts and feelings of the Germans brought up on sentimental poetry, mediaeval courtly romances and church singing.

In addition, the Rhineland possessed the most developed and varied industry in Germany and, consequently, also the most numerous industrial proletariat, the "grave-digger" of the old society.

No, it was not a coincidence that the Rhineland of Germany was the birthplace of Marx and Engels.

II

The Search for a Vocation

Your idea of happiness?
struggle

From *Confessions* by Karl Marx¹

One sunny spring day a thickset, black-haired man bearing a happy smile on his face and a swaddled infant in his arms made his way quickly to the Trier burgomaster's office. A few minutes later he appeared before an official who put the usual questions befitting such an occasion to him and wrote with the usual squeaky quill on paper:

"In the year eighteen hundred and eighteen, on the seventh day of the month of May, at four o'clock in the afternoon, there appeared before me, registrar of births, marriages and deaths at Trier burgomaster's office in Trier district, Herr Heinrich Marx, domiciled in Trier, aged thirty-seven, by profession barrister of the Higher Court of Appeal, who showed me a male child and stated that the said child had been born in Trier, on the fifth day of the month of May at two o'clock in the morning, to Herr Heinrich Marx, barrister by profession, domiciled in Trier, and his wife Henriette Presborck, and that they wished to give the

¹ *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 266.

name of Carl to this their child.”²

The official added his signature and handed the birth certificate to the father, little knowing that this was an historic document which testified to the coming into the world of a man who upon reaching maturity would be exiled from his native land and who, more than anyone else, would bring fame to it. Nor, of course, did the happy father suspect this. He walked back to his family, to the small two-storey house at 664, Brückengasse, barely managing to acknowledge all the polite bows and greetings of those he met.

Heinrich Marx was known and respected in this town—for his fine education, irreproachable morality, benevolence and readiness to help any innocent person in trouble, to help with all the legal skill at his disposal.

Descended from a family of rabbis, Heinrich Marx renounced the Jewish faith and adopted Lutheranism.

In the Marxes’ house, however, it was not only, and not so much, the Christian saints who were devoutly worshipped as Voltaire, Schiller, Racine, Rousseau, Lessing, Spinoza and Kant. Heinrich Marx absorbed the rich heritage of European culture and handed it down to his beloved son Karl. Thanks to this the many talents “placed in his cradle by the Muses” (Mehring) received full scope for development right from childhood.

It was a stroke of good fortune for the young Marx that his family was friendly with that of privy counsellor Baron Ludwig von Westphalen. Three people from the Westphalen family were to play an important part in his life: firstly, the head of the family himself, who became a second father to Marx, secondly, his youngest son Edgar—the good friend of his childhood games and gymnasium interests (at the end of the

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 635.

1840s he was close to the Communist League at one time) and, finally, Edgar's sister Jenny, Marx's future wife and loyal companion throughout his life.¹

Ludwig von Westphalen was a colourful figure. Descended from a noble line of Scottish and German families, he was one of the most educated men of his day and a great lover of poetry. Whereas Karl's father introduced him to Voltaire and Racine, Ludwig von Westphalen read him (together with Jenny and Edgar) Homer and Shakespeare which he knew by heart. It was old Westphalen who cultivated in Marx a taste for the poetic and who developed his aesthetic inclinations. And it was from him that Marx first heard of Saint-Simon.

Probably Westphalen was the first to turn Marx's mind to social themes and arouse a critical attitude to the existing order. It is no accident that Marx dedicated his debut in the field of science—his doctoral dissertation—to him as "my dear fatherly friend". In the dedication he describes Westphalen as a man "who greets every forward step of the times with the enthusiasm and the prudence of truth", who "never recoiled before the deep shadows of retrograde ghosts".² There can be no doubt that in the "old Westphalen house" the young Marx found just as rich spiritual food as in his own family or at the gymnasium.

The gymnasium as such could not give Marx very much in terms of spiritual development. The gymnasium system of education of that time was run ac-

¹ Jenny's elder brother, Ferdinand, subsequently became a bitter political opponent of Marx as Minister of the Interior in the reactionary Prussian government of the 1850s.

² Karl Marx, "Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 28.

cording to the "good old traditions" of swotting and cramming. The teachers valued most in their pupils the ability to commit ready-made knowledge to memory and reproduce it accurately: theological texts, historical facts, mathematical formulae. The best pupil for them was the one who could retell what he had learnt without faltering and write out the immutable truths of "Holy Writ" in a fair hand. Independence of opinion, the bold flight of fantasy, an original approach to the solution of problems—all this was considered more of a defect than a merit.

The gymnasium system of education did not so much develop the personality as repress it. It could only cultivate not a love of the sciences, but rather a loathing of them as a collection of tedious dogmas. The indisputable, categorical, absolute nature of what was taught corrupted the pupils' minds, developed lazy and parasitic thinking, the habit of repeating other people's ideas and bowing to that which was "acceptable". Thus, the school undermined the authority of science in the eyes of the pupils, for it cultivated an authoritarian way of thinking—thinking in canons. Instead of allegiance to the truth, it cultivated a belief in the immutability of truisms. Instead of the enquiring "torment of thought" in search of independent solutions, it offered the torture of senseless learning by rote.

The Trier gymnasium which Marx attended could be considered one of the best, as a more or less liberal spirit prevailed in it. Among Marx's gymnasium teachers were men quite well-known in their field: for example, Johann Hugo Wyttenbach (the headmaster), an adherent of the ideas of the French Enlightenment and Trier historian who was proud of being personally acquainted with Goethe. He sought to instil in his pupils a sacred belief in the progress and ennoblement of man. Johann Steininger, the teacher of ma-

thematics and physics, was under police surveillance.

However, these teachers could not, of course, make any substantial change in the character, aims and methods of teaching. The Prussian government kept a sharp eye on the teachers and pupils to ensure that their way of thinking was correct. To this end they appointed as co-director of the school a certain Vitus Loers, well-known for his reactionary views. The Trier gymnasium was required to supply the state with educated philistines—the bulwark of king and country. And this is what it did.

In Marx's class at the time he left school there were thirty-two pupils, most of whom were well above school age: from nineteen to twenty-seven. These older pupils were lazy and had stayed down in almost every class for a second year. Thirteen of them, who managed to hang on until the top class, failed the leaving examination.

Coming from petty-bourgeois, peasant families, many of Marx's co-pupils were completely under the sway of blind religious piety: the office of a priest was the height of their dreams. Judging by the school-leaving essays, of the twenty-five Catholics in the class more than half were eager to devote themselves to theology.

Their dreams came true. The school-leavers from the Trier gymnasium in 1835 provided Prussia with thirteen Catholic priests, seven barristers and higher officials, and also two doctors. Whoever would have thought then that the same group of school-leavers would give the world Karl Marx.

Certainly not his teachers: for Karl was by no means regarded as a brilliant pupil. His marks in all subjects were mediocre, the lowest one given by his teachers to the future creator of historical materialism was for his knowledge in the history examination.

There was nothing surprising about this. The criteria with which the teachers approached Marx were not made for him. The originality of his thoughts frightened them. His striving to get to the roots of a problem, to obtain a broad grasp of each subject, and to give vivid, not banal, expression to his thoughts were censured by them. They saw this as "the exaggerated pursuit of *recherché* expressions", "unnecessary overloading" and "verbosity". They were particularly irritated by his illegible handwriting. "What scrawls!" complained the Latin master, and other teachers agreed with him.

The revulsion for the pedantry of these "mentors of the young" which he took away from the school bench remained with Marx in subsequent years. He gives a description of one of these pedants in 1862 in a letter to Engels. Outwardly this mentor is a respectable person, proud of his erudition, but he never goes beyond studying and teaching by rote. His erudition consists of nothing but fishing up ready-made answers. He knows all the mathematical literature, but does not understand mathematics. If this pedant were honest, he could be of use to his pupils. If only he did not have recourse to false subterfuge and told them openly: there is a contradiction here, some people say this, others that: I have no personal opinion on the question; take a look and see if you can get to the bottom of it yourselves! "In this approach the pupils would receive certain material, on the one hand, and be encouraged to work for themselves, on the other."¹ Marx, however, immediately points out that he is making a requirement which contradicts the nature of the pedant.

It is hard to say to what extent Marx's gymnasium teachers resembled this picture. Possibly on a perso-

¹ Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 30, Berlin, 1964, S. 628.

nal level they were not pedantic. Yet it was not a matter of the individual psychic make-up of the person, but of the system, which inevitably engendered the pedantry and excruciating boredom of gymnasium teaching.

Karl Marx's spiritual world was formed not so much thanks to, as in spite of the gymnasium system of education—in independent and very intensive intellectual work, in the company of a small circle of friends who enjoyed good poetry and a good joke, in the company of the Westphalen family and, of course, with his father.

Barrister of the Higher Court of Appeal in Trier, Heinrich Marx was required by his office to take part in trials of a political nature; he was intimately acquainted with the terrible facts of social injustice and evidently talked to his son about them.

One can get an idea of what these facts were from an article by Karl Marx which he published in 1843 in the *Rheinische Zeitung*. In this article entitled "Justification of the Correspondent from the Mosel" he seeks to prove that the population of the Mosel area were not able to express their opinion frankly and publicly and describes some court cases occurring in the 1830s, that is, in the years of his youth.

"One citizen, particularly liked because of his good nature, jokingly remarked to the maidservant of a *district president*, who the evening before had busily applied himself to the bottle when celebrating the King's birthday in joyful company: '*Your master was a bit tiddly last night.*' For this innocent remark he was *publicly* brought before the police court at Trier, but, as might have been expected, he was *acquitted*."¹

¹ Karl Marx, "Justification of the Correspondent from the Mosel". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 355.

Possibly this court case remained fresh in Marx's memory because his father took part in it as a barrister, whose "irreproachable honesty" and "legal talents" helped to get the victim acquitted.

When some farmers from the Trier administrative district decided to send the Crown Prince a petition through their deputy to the Provincial Assembly, court proceedings were instituted against the deputy. An article published "several years ago" in a Rhenish paper "by Herr Kaufmann, professor of cameralistics 'on the distressed state of the vine-growers in the Mosel region'... was *banned* by order of the government".¹

These facts illustrate the political atmosphere which surrounded the young Marx.

In Trier in the 1830s there arose in the circles of the intelligentsia a liberal opposition to the Prussian government, an active participant of which was Karl Marx's father. At the beginning of 1834 meetings and demonstrations of liberals were held with singing of the *Marseillaise* and speeches in which the sharp ear of the police could detect echoes of the French Revolution. Heinrich Marx also sang "seditious" songs and made speeches which were actually of a most moderate nature. This, however, was enough to start legal proceedings against him.

Karl Marx was extremely fond of his father. The loving memories of him remained with his son in maturity: he always carried a photograph of his father and had it with him on his death bed. For all his religious and political liberalism, however, Heinrich Marx remained a Prussian patriot and pious Christian. An admirer of Schiller, he himself resembled one of Schiller's heroes, the good and sentimental Moor,

¹ Karl Marx, "Justification of the Correspondent from the Mosel". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 357.

whose whole happiness is in the well-being of his family and children. He was able to recognise the brilliant talent of his beloved son when the latter was very young, but he hoped that Karl would follow in his footsteps and choose himself a modest, but "noble" profession which would enable him to occupy a "worthy place" among respected citizens and become an exemplary head of a family.

The young Marx was considerably less enthusiastic about this prospect than his father. Already in his gymnasium years he had begun to feel an intense dislike of the happy ideal of philistine existence—even in its intelligently refined form.

We find the first confirmation of this in Marx's school-leaving essay written when he was seventeen and entitled "Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession".

It is interesting that unlike most of his classmates Marx regarded this essay not as an opportunity for a discussion on the purely personal theme of "what I would like to be", but as an opportunity for a broader social discussion of the objective and subjective conditions involved in the choice of a profession and the correspondence of personal ability to the vocation. Here already in the mind of the young Marx, "flashed like the summer lightning" (Mehring) of ideas which he developed fully and vividly in maturity.

"We cannot always," he writes, "attain the position to which we believe we are called; our relations in society have to some extent already begun to be established before we are in a position to determine them."¹

While his classmates were pompously discussing the

¹ Karl Marx, "Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. I, p. 4.

advantages of the military profession over that of a merchant or the blessings conferred by the post of theologian and priest, Marx wrote of the false glitter of professions, which excites vanity and appeals to the demon of ambition, of the "illusions" which embellish a future profession in the imagination. This is the reason, in his opinion, for delusions as to our capabilities, "a fault which takes its revenge on us ourselves, and even if it does not meet with the censure of the outside world it gives rise to more terrible pain in our hearts than such censure could inflict", a fault which gives rise to self-contempt that "ever gnaws at one's breast, sucking the lifeblood from one's heart and mixing it with the poison of misanthropy and despair"¹

In choosing a profession it is easy to succumb to "self-deception", if the choice is based on false ideas. The most dangerous professions for the young man who does not yet possess any firm principles, any strong, unshakeable convictions, are those "which are not so much involved in life itself as concerned with abstract truths".²

This interesting declaration throws light on the spiritual world of Marx at this period. It bears witness, probably, to his dissatisfaction with scholastic science and his growing desire to combine "abstract truths" with "involvement in life itself".

Marx challenges the philistine ideal of personal well-being with the following: "If he [a person] works only for himself, he may perhaps become a famous man of learning, a great sage, an excellent poet, but he can never be a perfect, truly great man."³

¹ Karl Marx, "Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 7.

² Ibid., p. 8.

³ Ibid.

Yes, of course, the self-perfection of a person is the aim in relation to which each profession is a means. But man can attain his own perfection "only by working for the perfection, for the good, of his fellow men". The welfare of mankind (and therefore our perfection also) is the "chief guide" which must direct us in the choice of a profession.

To support his idea Marx refers to the historical example of great men who by working for the common good have ennobled themselves. "Experience acclaims as happiest the man who has made the greatest number of people happy".¹

At the beginning of his independent path, Marx formulates the thesis which was to become the motto of his whole life: "Work for mankind." He admits that this path is strewn with thorns, not roses, but they do not worry him. He is aware of the full weight of the "great responsibility" of this choice.

But the choice has been made. "If we have chosen the position in life in which we can most of all work for mankind, no burdens can bow us down, because they are sacrifices for the benefit of all." Here too Marx again contrasts the "petty, limited, selfish joy" of philistine life with a life the happiness of which "will belong to millions".²

Of course, this essay is to a large extent still that of a schoolboy. Here we have in concentrated form the whole of Marx's previous spiritual development, the influence of Kant and the French Enlightenment can be felt, there are still some sentimental and romantic notes, and one finds references to "the Deity" giving "a general aim" and "a call from the Deity", but at the same time the whole manuscript already bears the author's own stamp, the style and content radiate

¹ Karl Marx, "Reflections of a Young Man on the Choice of a Profession" Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 8.

² Ibid.

that original strength and purposefulness of spirit which were a happy feature of Marx's character.

This work of a young man contains a whole programme for life, although it is expressed in general form. Marx is telling his own fortune according to the "horoscope" of his heart.

This gymnasium essay on the choice of a profession does not yet contain any indication that Marx's political aspirations have been aroused. It does show, however, his dislike for all that is reactionary. This dislike, as we have seen, he drew not only from books but also from the world around him.

We know, for example, that as early as 1833 forbidden literature, political poems, were discovered in the Trier gymnasium and one of the pupils was even arrested. This was bound to produce a ferment in the minds of the pupils and to influence Marx's attitude to life. When Marx received his school-leaving certificate and left his native town to go to Bonn University, he deliberately refused to pay a farewell visit to the school's co-director Vitus Loers, who had the special task of keeping the gymnasium pupils under police surveillance. In refusing to visit him Marx showed strength of character and this may even have led to a clash with his father.

In one of his first letters to his son Heinrich Marx reproaches him for this action. From this letter we learn that together with Karl another gymnasium pupil, Heinrich Clemens, also refused to visit Loers. In order to try and smooth over his son's "offence", which Loers took very badly, Marx's father was obliged to have recourse to a "white lie" and tell him that "we were there while he was away".¹

Marx's real clash with life and learning, however, was still to come.

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 647.

III

A "Fury of Irony" and a "Striving for Poetic Fire"

Your favourite motto?
De omnibus dubitandum.
From *Confessions* by Karl Marx¹

In the autumn of 1835 Marx went to study law at Bonn University. But for Marx the world was more than just jurisprudence. With youthful ardour he plunged into the whirlpool of an independent life, trying his hand first in this sphere of spiritual activity, then in that, while not forgetting either about reckless student gatherings, with their unbridled merry-making, feasting, duels, and all manner of adventures. At one of the duels Karl was wounded and was once even arrested "for disturbance of the peace at night". His friends loved him for his inexhaustible humour, but were afraid of the biting gibes and devastating epigrams for which Karl was famous even at the gymnasium.

The kind old Heinrich Marx evidently had good reason to ask his son how he managed to "combine duels with philosophy". The father's letters are full of concern for the physical and spiritual welfare of his son. He urges him to look after his health for "a

¹ *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 266.

sickly scholar is the most unfortunate being on earth". He preaches his son edifying sermons and quotes the example of a certain Herr Günster, who met with "frightful punishment" for his "youthful sins".¹

His father was worried not only by the moral, but also by the intellectual side of his son's student life. In one of his first letters to his father from Bonn University the seventeen-year-old Karl evidently wrote about his newborn doubts concerning religion. In reply Heinrich Marx writes:

"That you will continue to be good morally, I really do not doubt. But a great support for morality is pure faith in God. You know that I am anything but a fanatic. But this faith is a real requirement of man sooner or later, and there are moments in life when even the atheist is involuntarily drawn to worship the Almighty."²

In order to add weight to his argument Heinrich Marx refers to the examples of Newton, Locke and Leibniz. Not relying on admonitions alone, however, Heinrich Marx insists that Karl change the excessively free air of Bonn for the restrained, stiff atmosphere of Berlin, the capital of the Prussian kingdom. There were also more weighty reasons for this: the theoretical thought of Germany of that day was concentrated in Berlin University. To quote Ludwig Feuerbach, "other universities are real taverns compared with this workhouse".³

Again and again Karl was faced with the question of choosing a concrete profession; this became particularly pressing after Marx's engagement to the most beautiful girl in Trier, Baroness Jenny von West-

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 647, 649.

² *Ibid.*, p. 647.

³ Auguste Cornu, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels. Leben und Werk*, Bd., 1, S. 73.

phalen, "the Queen of the ball", which was his "first and most joyous victory" (Mehring).

In his letters Marx's father did not tire of reminding his son that Jenny had made a great sacrifice for him. Now that Karl in the absolutely incomprehensible way had won the heart of Jenny, who had turned down better-endowed suitors for him, he must realise that the fate of this unusual young woman was in his hands, and therefore he must win "the respect of the world" and concern himself with material provision for his future family.

Karl realised this himself. In Berlin University, where he went in 1836, he devoted himself to his studies with the same irrepressible, all-consuming passion with which he had devoted himself to the joys of life in Bonn. His spiritual interests were most diverse. He was deeply interested in classical antiquity, drama, aesthetics, poetry, philosophy and law. He was still engaged in the painful search for a vocation. At one time he thought that this was writing. He composed ballads, sonnets and whole notebooks of verse, and even wrote an historical drama and a comic novel. His father discussed seriously with him the advantages and disadvantages of the profession of poet and writer, literary critic, and playwright, analysing possible subjects and talking about his talent.

Heinrich Marx, unlike his son, who, in his father's opinion, was given to "abstract idealising", was worried about practical questions. He advised Karl to write a drama in the "patriotic" style, to convey the "genius" of the Prussian monarchy, to treat an historical theme in the German spirit, for such an "ode" was capable of "laying the foundation for a reputation" and "establishing a name".¹ He was not inclined to approve his son's plan—to become a literary

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 672, 673.

critic, because even the great Lessing received too few roses in his lifetime and died a poor librarian.¹

One must, however, give Heinrich Marx his due—as has already been mentioned, he was the first to recognise Karl's exceptional abilities, the first to sense, albeit vaguely, his great future. "You have still a long time to live, God willing, to the benefit of yourself and your family and, if my surmise is not mistaken, for the good of mankind,"² he wrote to his son in 1836.

At times, however, Heinrich Marx feared for the fate of his son. His talent, his lack of similarity to his contemporaries, his brimming strength of spirit and resolute searching for the truth—all this suggested to the father the idea of his son's "fateful demon" which would divert him from the clear path to worldly success, and incite him to rebel against the quiet life.

"Is that demon heavenly or Faustian?" is the form in which Heinrich Marx expressed the question which was tormenting him. The fate of Goethe's Faust did not seem an example worthy of imitation to the fond father. The figure of Faust, the eternally dissatisfied seeker after truth and the meaning of life who is tempted by the devil, who never knows a moment's peace in his pursuit of the elusive mirage of the splendid moment, who in search of true happiness is not content with its small share and brings unhappiness to the people close to him, who regards as worthy of life and freedom only those who are willing to sacrifice for them their own life and freedom,—this figure could not be attractive to Marx's father, he feared it as a phantom which was threatening Karl.

¹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 1, Halbband, 2, S. 210.

² Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 662.

"At times my heart delights in thinking of you and your future. And yet at times I cannot rid myself of ideas which arouse in me sad forebodings and fear when I am struck as if by lightning by the thought: is your heart in accord with your head, your talents? Has it room for the earthly but gentler sentiments which in this vale of sorrow are so essentially consoling for a man of feeling?... Will you ever—and that is not the least painful doubt of my heart—will you ever be capable of truly human, domestic happiness? Will—and this doubt has no less tortured me recently since I have come to love a certain person like my own child—will you ever be capable of imparting happiness to those immediately around you?"¹ The "certain person" is, of course, Jenny von Westphalen, about whose happiness Heinrich Marx is so touchingly concerned.

But how is one to interpret happiness itself? Probably Karl Marx did not bring to "those immediately around him" the cloudless "domestic" happiness of which his father dreamed. He sacrificed, to quote his own words, health, happiness and family to his life's work—*Capital*. Jenny had to share with her husband all the burdens of his restless life: wandering, prison, emigration, poverty and savage persecution. Three of her children died. But she was Marx's closest associate and counsellor, his good genie. She lived to see Marx's name become the symbol of the new, fighting world—from Russia to America,—and this compensated for everything.

Heinrich Marx's presentiments did not deceive him. His son's demon was not of heavenly, but Faustian origin. It would not let him stop, it impelled him ceaselessly to go on and on in his spiritual development, in his search for perfection, in his eternal

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 670.

pursuit of elusive and alluring "devilish logic", the phantom of complete knowledge, of a total understanding of reality. And for this it demanded sacrifices both from Marx himself and from "those immediately around him". Marx devoted himself entirely to the service of the logic of social truth. He remained true to the idea of happiness ("sacrifices for the benefit of all", "happiness will belong to millions") which he had expressed in his school essay.

Unlike Faust, Marx bore "Mephistopheles" within himself—he was always the most merciless critic of his own works. He applied his beloved dictum "subject everything to doubt" first and foremost to the works of his own pen.

The poetic experiments of his early student years, in particular, met with a harsh verdict. In a letter to his father the nineteen-year-old Marx appraises them as follows: "Attacks on our times, diffuse and inchoate expressions of feeling, nothing natural, everything built out of moonshine, complete opposition between what is and what ought to be, rhetorical reflections instead of poetic thoughts, but perhaps also a certain warmth of feeling and striving for poetic fire."¹ Evidently Marx's critical sense did not deceive him here.

But even when, eventually, in some poems he caught sight of "the glittering realm of true poetry like a distant fairy palace", this success served Marx only as an occasion for a sober assessment of his poetic ability, "and all my creations crumbled into nothing".² This should be understood literally: Marx burnt his poems and sketches for novels.

Having abandoned "the dances of the Muses and

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 11.

² *Ibid.*, p. 17.

the music of the Satyrs",¹ Marx turned to science with all the more zeal. Earlier, too, poetry had been only a secondary occupation for him. He would set aside an unfinished ballad or drama in verse to immerse himself in jurisprudence and philosophy. He read Lessing's *Laokoon*, Winckelmann's *Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* and Ovid's *Elegies* alternately with Reimarus' *Von den Kunsttrieben der Tiere*, Luden's *Die Geschichte des Deutschen Volkes*, Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, and works by Bacon, Schelling, Kant and Hegel. He got through a whole mountain of special literature on jurisprudence. The actual volume alone of what he read in one year is quite astounding.

But Marx did not simply read. He had mastered a habit which he was to follow all his life—that of copying large extracts from what he had read and accompanying them with his own reflections. This helped him greatly in his work, organising his thinking and his memory.

Another distinctive feature of Marx is that his *study* of a new field of knowledge immediately advanced into an independent *analysis* of this field by him. His reading of literature was never the passive process of the student, but merely an occasion, an impetus, a stimulus to independent, creative thought.

In his study of philosophy and law, he tries to trace "a philosophy of law covering the whole field of law". Merely as an introduction to this subject the eighteen-year-old Marx writes an "unhappy opus ... a work of almost 300 pages"²

While studying the history of art and the history of philosophy, in the course of the same academic year he wrote a dialogue of about twenty-four pages in which "art and science ... were to some extent uni-

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 17.

² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

ted". The dialogue was entitled "Cleanthes, or the Starting Point and Necessary Continuation of Philosophy". It is a pity that it has not survived, because this is perhaps the only work of that period which earned praise ... from Marx himself. Everything else was subjected to the same devastating criticism as the poems.

In the course of this academic year (1836/37) there were many sleepless nights and many bitter spiritual battles. The "wanderings of the spirit" usually ended in rejection of what had been done. Marx would adopt the point of view of this or that authority in the field of philosophy and jurisprudence and try to develop it to its logical conclusion. But as a result he would discover the invalidity of the authority in question, of the latter's teaching, and of his own searchings. He would devastate the sanctuary of one god, only to fill it with new gods. He would overthrow one idol, to put other idols on the pedestal of truth. He wrote whole volumes of his own works—poetic, aesthetic and philosophical—only to burn them later. In one year he produced as much as other writers create in a whole lifetime. But what would be the object of smug pride to the philistine in science, brought the young Marx the torment of discontent.

Marx destroys his imaginary worlds, almost before he had time to create them, and set off in search of new worlds. In the poem *Sought*, dedicated to Jenny, he himself writes of this as follows:

I rose, broke free of all that bound me;
"Where would you go? " "A world I'd find me! "
"Are there not here lush meadows gay,
Below—the seas, above—star-play? "...

"The world must rise out of myself
And to my breast incline itself.

From my life's blood its well-springs come.
My soul's breath its aethereal dome."

I wandered far as I could go,
Returned, held worlds above, below.

Within there leaped the stars and sun;
The lightning flashed, and they sank down. ¹

Constant dissatisfaction with what had been achieved, the perpetual search for perfection remained his distinguishing features in his mature years also. His thought barely took shape before it outstripped what he had achieved, viewed what had been written from yet unscaled summits and after this followed a new summit. His purpose was not to lay the heights proudly at his feet, but only to reach a positive height from which the truth would appear before him in its true light.

Balzac wrote a small sketch entitled *Le Chef-d'oeuvre Inconnu* (The Unknown Masterpiece). It is about an unusually talented artist who paints a single, brilliant picture, wishing to embody the whole perfection of colour in it and express nature in such a way as to excel it. He works for many years with great inspiration, frequently altering each detail in an effort to make the colours come alive, like sculpture in the hands of the mythical Pygmalion. Eventually he feels that his aim has been achieved, but the dumb-founded spectators behold only a disorderly collection of brush strokes. An excess of talent has ruined the picture.

In February 1867, when his exhausting work of many years on the first volume of *Capital* was nearing conclusion, Marx reread this sketch by Balzac and recommended it to Engels as a tiny masterpiece full of exquisite irony.² In it Marx evidently saw the

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 559.

² Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 31, Berlin, 1965, S. 278.

irony of his own tortuous search for perfection in his work on *Capital*, when it seemed at times that this undertaking would never be completed.

Unlike Balzac's hero, Marx emerged victorious from this duel with himself, with his merciless self-criticism, with his inner demand for the fullest possible grasp of the subject and the best possible form of exposition. His picture of capitalist society turned out to be a genuine masterpiece which would survive the centuries, and he had every right to call his *Capital* an artistic whole. However, he paid for this with many years of the most intense activity. It would be more accurate to say—with his life, for his whole life was a preparation for the creation of *Capital*.

Like all true creators, Marx was always above his works. The richness of his spiritual world was reflected only partially and very incompletely in the richness of what he wrote, so that his "best" work remained unwritten. Hence the constant torment of dissatisfaction.

Scepticism may be a sign of sluggishness and cowardice of thought, which quails before the complexity of the secrets of life and proclaims them to be under the seven seals like the Old Testament Ecclesiastes who sought and searched out by wisdom "all things that are done under heaven" and came to the conclusion that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit".

Yet the very same doubt is an essential weapon for theoretical daring, when thought passes impartial judgement on the disturbed phantoms of the past, the power of which is by no means phantasmal.

Hegel wrote of comic irony, tragic irony and, finally, the irony of doubt which serves as the all-round art of destruction, and leads to solipsism, when, as Diderot put it, a sentient piano imagines that it is the only piano in the world. But there is also, so to say, "constructive" irony, which serves as the leaven for

all creative ferment, which assists the birth of a new idea, clears the way for it, and inspires it with confidence.

Mankind, to quote an aphorism, takes leave of its past with a *smile*. It also takes leave of its *theoretical* past with a smile. In the age of the Renaissance an ironical attitude towards the authority of religion and the authority of "Aristotle with his tonsure" was the forerunner of a revolution in the field of thought: the natural science and philosophy of the new age. The gay, bawdy laughter of Francois Rabelais rang out before Sir Francis Bacon dethroned the "idols" of mediaeval dogmatics with logical arguments and refuted them with new ideas and ideals.

What is true for society as a whole, in this case is also true for the individual, particularly for such a person as Marx. A genius is always the bearer of the spirit of negation and irony, for no one senses the transient, wretched and pathetic in what is "great" as acutely as he. No one else can clean the "great" of them so carefully, free it with the fine chisel of the sculptor.

If we wish to delve into the sources of Marx's irony, we must turn to art.

Balzac calls his bitter ironic hero the embodiment of art with all its secrets, transports and reveries. This is very profound, for art is alien to all dogmatism, all petrified ideas of life. It comprehends reality as a process, as movement, as action, otherwise it would not be art. Even in its monumental genre it protests against "fossilised" material and seeks to invest it with the pulse and breath of life.

Unlike the theoretical assimilation of reality, which demands from the scholar accuracy and completeness of definitions, formulations and theorems, thereby creating—willy-nilly—the possibility for turning the results attained into "constant", "unshakeable", etc.

truths,—in art (true art, of course) there is no such refuge for the petrification of our ideas about the world.

It is art, above all, that develops those abilities of the individual which serve as a reliable guarantee against “sclerosis” of thought and at the same time are the “leaven” of creative ferment, an inexhaustible spring for the birth of new ideas. It is the ability to see the world as a whole, it is a sense of proportion, harmony and beauty, imagination, fantasy and intuition, a sense of humour and last (but by no means least)—irony.

Art does not develop professional qualities, it develops the universal and truly humane ability essential in any profession—the ability to create. This is why its role is so great in the development of intellectual culture regardless of whose intellect it is: the scientist, the artist, or the engineer.

From early childhood Marx grew up in an atmosphere full of art. At the same time as Schiller was arousing in him a hatred of despotism, of violence against the unfortunate, Shakespeare was revealing to him the complex world of human feelings and relationships and refining his natural talent for wit, Goethe was compelling him to unite feeling with thought, the strange play of fantasy with noble reflections on the meaning of life and death, a Mephistophelean grin at the hypocrisy of conventional morality with a Wagnerian passion for knowledge and belief in its omnipotence.

But let us return to the student room in a quiet street in old Berlin, where amid clouds of tobacco smoke, in the faint light of a burnt-down candle, a black-haired youth whose name at that time—in 1837—did not mean anything to anybody, Karl Heinrich Marx, was finishing a letter to his father.

In the letter to his father Marx announced that

after so much had been negated, he was "seized with a veritable fury of irony", it seemed to him that all his labours had been "fruitless" and that he would not have the strength to calm the "turbulent spectres" which he had aroused.

But this was only the temporary crisis of a turning point in life, when his work was partly a "swan song" for the first, immature period of his clash with reality and science, and partly a bold prelude to future, much more serious and fundamental clashes.

Here and there in this prelude, albeit not very confidently and clearly, one hears the notes of motifs which are later to swell into whole symphonies. The intellectual labour which negated everything and was merciless to the world and itself was not fruitless, as Marx had thought. Its negations were not useless or empty, they concealed the seed of new fruits. His thought was uprooting the prejudices of traditional, pseudo-scientific nonsense and turning over the soil for the shoots of real science.

That this was the case can be seen from the same letter to his father of November 10, 1837.

In a detailed description to his father of his extensive work on the philosophy of law, Marx, searching for the causes of its imperfection, notes that "from the outset an obstacle to grasping the truth ... was the unscientific form of mathematical dogmatism". Marx has in mind the "geometrical" method which had been developed in philosophy since the time of Spinoza, a method in which the object is regarded as something given from various sides, just as a triangle in geometry is analysed in different relationships, and this analysis is recorded in theorems or in concepts obtained by strict, formal deduction from premises. The triangle itself remains invariable and "does not develop into anything further", in other words, "the author argues hither and thither, going

round and round the subject dealt with, without the latter taking shape as something living and developing in a many-sided way".

The method, which gives excellent results in the study of the external forms of "dead" matter, is completely inadequate for the expression of "living" matter, and particularly for the expression of social phenomena, for the concrete analysis of the "living world of ideas". Here "the object itself must be studied in its development; arbitrary divisions must not be introduced, the rational character of the object itself must develop as something imbued with contradictions in itself and find its unity in itself".¹

To study the object in its development as something self-forming, "developing in a many-sided way, and living"—this is the methodological requirement which found such brilliant embodiment in *Capital*.

There is, of course, a great deal of Hegel in the formula quoted. One can feel his influence here. It can also be seen in the fact that Marx criticises himself for contrasting matter and form, so that he obtained something like a desk with drawers full of "matter". Writing ironically about this approach, to which he paid tribute, Marx came to the conclusion that "the form should only be the continuation of the content".

But Marx did not hasten to embrace Hegel, although the latter rescued him from some of the impasses of traditional philosophising. He admits that earlier "the grotesque craggy melody" of Hegelian philosophy did not appeal to him. But even after he had read Hegel "from beginning to end" during an illness caused by overstrain, Karl continued to be wary of him. He writes of his "nagging annoyance at having had to make an idol of a view that I hated"

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 12.

The "craggy melody" evidently possessed the magnetic charm of sirens' singing and was hard to resist.

Be that as it may, among the enthusiastic admirers of Hegel, whom Marx found in the Young Hegelians who had joined together in the Doctors' Club, he stood out as one who was not dazzled by the aura of worship surrounding this authority. The question of whether he was to follow Hegel's path remained an open one.

Before his comprehensive study of Hegel, Marx had already experienced the influence of two other giants of classical German philosophy: Kant and Fichte. Whereas in the works of Kant, Marx was attracted by the high moral ideals and resolute scepticism of the dogma of philosophical and religious thought, Fichte impressed him primarily by the active, impassioned, strong-willed nature of his philosophy.

The young Marx, who himself thirsted for action and longed to make scientific thought a fire and sword to change the world, obtained a great deal in his early student years from the philosophy and outlook of Fichte.

Fichte's personality appealed greatly to the radically inclined young people of the day. He happily combined a love of theoretical thinking with passionate craving for action. He was fighter and philosopher in one, thought and action were a unity for him. He was known as the Bonaparte of philosophy, but in the early period of his work he might well have been called its Jacobin. He considered it an honour to be granted the right to call himself a citizen of revolutionary France.

Unlike Kant, Fichte was not given to compromise in any form. His thought and actions were challenging, "insultingly" bold. His writings were imbued with a proud independence, love of freedom and brave dignity; his style was clear, majestic and mo-

ving. In him one senses the frank claim to govern the spirit of the whole age with the help of his philosophy. "Philosophy," he wrote, "is not dry speculation and rummaging in empty formulae ... it is transformation, rebirth and renewal of the spirit in its deepest roots: the planting of a new organ, and out of it a new world in time."¹

Instead of passive meditation Fichte placed creative action, the creative act of the human individual. His main idea was that man creates himself in his actions. These ideas had a great influence on the Young Hegelians with whom Marx associated in his student years.

Of course, the Fichtean "philosophy of action" was an idealistic interpretation of the world, and his practice was merely the practice of the spirit. Marx was to traverse a long path of spiritual development before the "rational core" of Fichtean ideas (and the ideas of other thinkers) could burgeon in the dialectico-materialist doctrine on practice, in the creation of a scientific theory which became a true instrument for changing the world.

Both Kant and Fichte were humanists, but the ideal of the freedom and full-blooded development of the individual was either relegated to the distant future (Kant) or assumed utopian features (Fichte). Why the classical philosophy of German idealism did not satisfy the young Marx can be seen from one of his epigrams written in 1837:

Kant and Fichte soar to heavens blue
Seeking for some distant land,
I but seek to grasp profound and true
That which—in the street I find.²

¹ J.G. Fichte, *Werke*, Bd. 6, S. 415-16.

² Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 577.



Johann Gottlieb Fichte

What he writes of Kant and Fichte applies also to Hegel of course. Marx longs to have a theoretical understanding not only of the trichotomy of the "spirit" but also of what is taking place "in the street", in real life.

His reflections on the past year are summarised in the following conclusion: "From the idealism which, by the way, I had compared and nourished with the idealism of Kant and Fichte, I arrived at the point of seeking the idea in reality itself. If previously the gods had dwelt above the earth, now they became its centre."¹

There is no question here of the transition to materialism: that is still a long way off. The "gods" are not overthrown, they are merely moved from the other world to this one, from a "thing-in-itself" to a "thing-for-us". For reality itself is proclaimed as merely the temple of the divine idea.

But Marx entered this temple not to become its eternal prisoner and contemplate reverently, on bended knee, the absolute idea which comprehends itself in Hegelian philosophy. He wanted to test whether this complacent deity really was so "absolute", whether it could withstand the fierce blows of his biting criticism.

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 18.

IV

“In simple words, I hate the pack of gods”

Then the gauntlet do I fling
Scornful in the world's wide open face.
Down the giant She-Dwarf, whimpering,
Plunges, cannot crush my happiness.

Like unto a God I dare
Through that ruined realm in triumph roam.
Every word is Deed and Fire,
And my bosom like the Maker's own.

KARL MARX¹

The student years in Berlin were a time of intense development not only of the philosophical, but also of the political consciousness of Karl Marx. We have seen that he felt an acute antipathy for everything reactionary even in his gymnasium years. In Bonn University he joined a literary circle of young writers, an organisation which was regarded as suspect by the police. His certificate of release from Bonn University contains a note to the effect that he “carried prohibited weapons in Cologne”.²

There can be no doubt that in Berlin, the capital of the Prussian monarchy, Marx gained the opportunity of feeling more acutely the pulse of the country's political life. He became acquainted with radically inclined young writers, attended the lectures of such liberal Hegelian professors as August Heffter, and took part in student debates on controversial scientific, political and religious questions.

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 586.

² *Ibid.*, p. 658.

Evidently Karl told his father about his growing doubts of a political character. Heinrich Marx shared them to a certain extent, but nevertheless he was frightened at the slightest hint of the possibility that his son might develop "excessively Left-wing" views, for this would mean the end of his career.

"Your views on law are not without truth," he wrote to his son at the end of 1836, "but are very likely to arouse storms if made into a system, and are you not aware how violent storms are among the learned? If what gives offence in this matter itself cannot be entirely eliminated, at least the form must be conciliatory and agreeable."¹

Avoid storms, be conciliatory and agreeable, eliminate what gives offence! This advice was given to a young man in whom one could already sense the fiery temperament of the indomitable fighter, the future "Zeus the Thunder-bearer" of revolutionary storms!

The area of misunderstanding between father and son was increasing. It was as if a pane of glass had come between them: they continued to smile at each other and were still bound by the warmest feelings of kinship, but they already had difficulty in hearing and understanding what the other was saying. Most indicative is the reaction of the father to the long confessional letter of Karl Marx referred to in the preceding chapter.

Marx's intensive work throughout the year, his scholarly and poetic questing aroused not approval, but great irritation and indignation from his father. He showers his son with a torrent of reproaches mixed with tears. Heinrich Marx feels that at a time when he himself is close to the grave, when his younger son Eduard has just died, Karl, now the family's only hope, is causing them nothing but bitter

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 665.

disappointment. He is squandering his time, strength and health in senseless activities, "what he builds to-day he destroys tomorrow", he does not appreciate "his own work" and does not assimilate "the work of others", he is wasting his talent on vague abstractions which are of no use whatsoever, on "senseless and inexpedient" erudition which bears no fruit.

Heinrich Marx fell into despair, imagining his son's way of life: "Disorderliness, musty excursions into all departments of knowledge, musty brooding under a gloomy oil-lamp; running wild in a scholar's dressing-gown and with unkempt hair instead of running wild over a glass of beer; unsociable withdrawal with neglect of all decorum and even of all consideration for the *father*.—The art of association with the world restricted to a dirty work-room, in the classic disorder of which perhaps the love-letters of a Jenny and the well-meant exhortations of a father, written perhaps with tears, are used for pipe-spills..."¹

So much for the present, but what about the future? Could life with a "scholar grown wild" in a poor garret be a worthy future for such a girl as Jenny! Heinrich Marx's heart bled when he thought of what awaited his so unpractical son if the parental hand could no longer guide him. He entreated him to exorcise the "evil spirits" and take a sober, practical view of things. He listed to Karl his duties and obligations to his parents and his fiancée. He hoped that fulfilment of them would help to return his son to the "way of truth", would "turn an uncivilised strip-ling into an orderly human being, a negating genius into a genuine thinker, a wild ringleader of wild young fellows into a man fit for society, one who retains sufficient pride not to twist and turn like an eel, but has enough practical intelligence and tact to

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 688.

feel that it is only through intercourse with moral-minded people that he can learn the art of showing himself to the world in his most pleasant and most advantageous aspect, of winning respect, love and prestige as quickly as possible, and of making practical use of the talents which mother nature has in fact lavishly bestowed upon him".¹

These were his parting words to his son. Heinrich Marx remained confined to his bed until his death in May 1839. Auguste Cornu is right in saying that Heinrich Marx's early death prevented a bitter conflict between him and his son, and therefore Marx was able to retain happy memories of his father throughout his life.²

As for Marx's mother, Henriette, while always showing great concern for her son's health she understood nothing of his spiritual strivings. She lived until 1863, and regarded her son as a miserable failure. She used to say bitterly that he would have done better to acquire some capital instead of writing a book about it. In her way she was right, for the royalties from the publication of *Capital*, as Marx himself admitted, did not cover even the cost of the tobacco which he smoked when writing it. By bourgeois, philistine standards the cause to which he devoted his life was a most unprofitable one!

The parental ideal of the "respectable" scholar moving in society and extracting the maximum advantage (for the "public good", of course!) from his knowledge, was profoundly alien and distasteful to Marx even in his student years. How many such "scholars" he had been able to observe in the lecture hall and in life. (How many "diplomaed lackeys" of

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 688.

² Auguste Cornu, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels. Leben und Werk*, Bd. 1, S. 103-04.

capital he had rewarded according to their deserts!)

As if in reply to the parental entreaties to avoid "storms among the learned", the young Marx wrote in one of his poems:

Never can I do in peace
That with which my Soul's obsessed,
Never take things at my ease:
I must press on without rest....

All things I would strive to win.
All the blessings Gods impart.
Grasp all knowledge deep within,
Plumb the depths of Song and Art....

Therefore let us risk our all,
Never resting, never tiring;
Not in silence dismal, dull,
Without action or desiring:

Not in brooding introspection
Bowed beneath a yoke of pain,
So that yearning, dream and action
Unfulfilled to us remain.¹

Marx's poetic experiments were, of course, by no means perfect, a fact which the young poet himself realised fully. But these poems are nevertheless extremely interesting, for they serve as a mirror of his spiritual ferment, they reflect his attitude towards the world, his social likes and dislikes, and his developing social consciousness.

Art in general, and poetry in particular, always respond sensitively to changes in the political atmosphere and serve as a barometer for social upheavals, particularly when political action in other forms is impossible for the time being. This was the state of affairs in Germany at the end of the 1830s, where "every public movement ... died out".² But it was the

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 525-27.

² Frederick Engels, "The State of Germany". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 32.

calm before the storm.

The first gusts of the new wind had already begun to be felt. From 1835 the voice of young writers rang out more and more loudly. They were members of the Young Germany group and they called for freedom of the press and worship and a constitution. The sarcastic lyre of Heine was already resounding over Germany, the freedom-loving poems of Platen and Freiligrath were appearing, and Georg Herwegh had begun his poetic career. The brilliant poetic tribune and publicist, Ludwig Börne was firing volleys at Prussian despotism from abroad.

So the exceptional interest in poetry, which is characteristic at this period of both the young Marx and the young Engels, is only natural. They began their creative activity as poets: their first publications were poems. For a long time Marx hoped to become a professional writer.

The poetic experiments of the young Marx are full of expectation of a storm and rebellious sentiments. One senses clearly in them an active dislike of the world around and a challenge to it. His imagination gave birth to a mass of wild, frenzied passions, the hyperbolic figure of the tragic hero who is "twined on the wheel of flame" and dreams of flinging his arms "around the cruel Being" of this world and shattering it by his "long-drawn curse" (tragedy *Oulanem*).¹ Like Heine, who exclaimed: "I am the sword, I am the flame!", Marx longs for each of his words to become "Deed and Fire".²

How strange are the encounters of human destinies! Whereas in the middle of the 1840s his meeting with Marx was a great event in Heine's life—his poetic arrows acquired more political sharpness,

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 599.

² *Ibid.*, p. 586.

somewhat earlier, in the second half of the 1830s, Marx's encounter with Heine's poetry played an equally important part in the creative development of Marx himself.

It is an established fact that by 1837 the nineteen-year-old Marx was already acquainted with Heine's works, although at that time it was forbidden even to mention his name in Germany. In the letter to his father quoted above Marx deliberately quotes a line from the exiled poet's notorious poem *Frieden* about the dirty water of the Spree which "washes souls and dilutes the tea".¹

Heine, the rebel of German poetry, was undoubtedly one of Marx's "idols" at that time and this is reflected in his poems. One senses Heine's new structure in them with frequent rhythmic dissonances which fully matched the dissonances of Marx's "mutinous spirit". And, most important, one feels Heine's irony in them, mixed from a blend of romanticism and the most "earthly" realism, intimate lyricism and civic spirit.

Flinging the gauntlet with a courtly gesture into the "world's wide open face" Marx does not forget to deal it some more forceful blows with the sword of sarcasm and irony at the accountant morality and virtue of fat bellies. Of special interest in this respect are the epigrams in which he ridicules German philistinism, the stupid and dumb public.

In its armchair, stupid and dumb,
The German public watches it come.
Hither and thither rumbles the storm,
Heaven clouds over, more dark and forlorn.
Lightning hisses, snakes out of sight,
Feelings remain inviolate.
But when the sun comes out in greeting,
The wind's soft sighing, the storm abating,

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 18.

It stirs itself, makes a fuss at last,
And writes a book: *The Commotion Is Past*;

Is seized with an urge for fantasy,
Would plumb the whole thing thoroughly;
Believes it's extremely wrong of Heaven
To play such jokes, though brilliant even,
It should the All systematically treat;
First rub the head and then the feet;

Just like a baby it carries on
Looking for things which are dead and gone;
Should get the Present in proper perspective,
Let Heaven and Earth go their ways respective;
They've followed their courses as before,
And the wave laps quiet on the rocky shore.¹

Marx mocks the complacency of the philistine who does not know how a person can fail to be pleased with himself if he has his purse safely tucked away. In the comic novel *Scorpion and Felix*, Marx gives a satirical picture of "sound German stock", a "most Christian" family, ridiculing reactionary figures and fighters against liberalism. Here one finds touches of the brilliant wit which distinguished Marx's mature works. He remarks that everything great has its opposite and is ousted by it: the giant by the dwarf, the genius by the hidebound philistine, Caesar the hero by the play-acting Octavianus, the Emperor Napoleon by the bourgeois king Louis Philippe, the philosopher Kant by the carpet-knight Krug, the poet Schiller by the Hofrat Raupach, and Leibniz's heaven by Wolff's classroom. In the same way every storm at sea presupposes mud.²

Later, in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx returns to the satirical image created in

¹ Karl Marx, "Epigrams". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 575-76.

² Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 628.

his youth: "Hegel remarks somewhere that all facts and personages of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce. Caussidière for Danton, Louis Blanc for Robespierre, the *Montagne* of 1848 to 1851 for the *Montagne* of 1793 to 1795, the Nephew for the Uncle. And the same caricature occurs in the circumstances attending the second edition of the eighteenth Brumaire."¹

The philistine always prefers the caricature to its original. The storm frightens him, but in the mud which remains after it he feels splendid. He again tries to "systematise", to put the whole storm into books for which it is easy to find a buyer. The young Marx constantly returns to this theme in his epigrams.

The Germans once actually stirred in their stumps,
With a People's Victory turned up trumps.

And when all that was over and done,
On every corner, everyone
Read: "Wonderful things are in store for you—
Three legs for all instead of two! "

This shook them badly, and in due course
They were all smitten by deep remorse.

"Too much has happened at once, it's plain.

We'll have to behave ourselves again.

The rest it were better to print and bind,
And buyers will not be hard to find."²

In these works the young Marx gives vent to his political feelings: his intolerance of reaction, his expectation of a revolutionary storm and the victory of

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1973, p. 398.

* Marx is ironically contrasting here the great leaders of the French Revolution, Danton and Robespierre, with the half-hearted petty-bourgeois politicians Caussidière and Louis Blanc, who tried to play a leading part in the revolution of 1848.

² Karl Marx, "Epigrams". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 577.

the people, his criticism of political cowardice and indifference, his ironical attitude to the Germans' remarkable talent for bringing about a revolution in books, but not in life.

Franz Mehring is not quite right in saying that the rich gifts placed by the Muses in Marx's cradle did not include the gift of rhythmic speech. Although many of Marx's poems are imitative and, as the young author himself considered, diffuse and vague, they do contain grains of poetry which glitter "like a distant fairy palace". These are present both in the lyrical poems dedicated "To my dear, ever beloved Jenny" and particularly in the satirical verse where his keen thought and sense of anger make themselves felt. Whereas the influence of Schiller's sentimental romanticism is perceptible in his early poetical experiments, the later verse bears the imprint of Goethe and particularly Heine.

With biting sarcasm Marx attacks the hypocritical exhortations of the church fathers, the spiritual mentors of the philistine. He devotes several epigrams to the Lutheran pastor Pustkuchen, who wrote a cheap parody of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* in the 1820s and accused the great German poet of "immorality".

Pastor Pustkuchen should bake pies of his empty sermons in the church kitchen for his faithful flock. But "dwarfs" often suffer from megalomania, they seek vainly to measure up to a "giant". They approach him with their own standards and are capable of seeing only the mud on his colossal boots. Then the "dwarfs" become arrogantly condescending—they regard the "giant's" merits as defects, and find him lacking in what they, the "dwarfs", value in themselves. For what are they honoured? Indeed, Marx says ironically of Pustkuchen, so devout in his spiritual simplicity, how can Goethe be so highly thought of if he did not write a single sermon? He

studied only nature, when he should have been studying Luther's doctrine and writing poems on that.

Goethe can give the ladies a fright,
For elderly women he's not quite right.
He understood Nature, but this is the quarrel,
He wouldn't round Nature off with a moral.
He should have got Luther's doctrine off pat
And made up his poetry out of that.
He had beautiful thoughts, if sometimes odd,
But omitted to mention—"Made by God".

And what is there of use in his writings? After all,
"a sum in arithmetic had him floored!"

Extremely strange is this desire
To elevate Goethe higher and higher.
How low in actual fact his reach—
Did he ever give us a sermon to preach?
Show me in Goethe solid ground
For Peasant or Pedagogue to expound.
Such a genius marked with the stamp of the Lord
That a sum in arithmetic had him floored.¹

And what about *Faust*? What a splendid subject this would be for an edifying story of how sins "lead man to the Devil" and how one should worry about saving one's soul. But Goethe showed it all wrongly. His Faust "dared to doubt God and the World", and "silly young Gretchen had to adore him instead of getting his conscience to gnaw him" and "telling him he was the Devil's prey, and the Day of Judgement was well on the way".

Hear Faust in the full authentic version;
The Poet's account is sheer perversion.
Faust was up to his ears in debts,
Was dissolute, played at cards for bets.
No offer of help from above was extended,
So he wanted it all ignominiously ended.

¹Karl Marx, "Epigrams". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 579.

But was overwhelmed by a fearful sensation
Of Hell and the anguish of desperation.
He then devoted due reflection
To Knowledge, Deed, Life, Death, and Perdition;
And on these topics had much to say
In a darkly mystical sort of way.
Couldn't the Poet have managed to tell
How debts lead man to the Devil and Hell.
Who loses his credit may well conceivably
Forfeit redemption quite irretrievably.¹

Schiller is a different matter. "Schiller, thinks he, had been less of a bore, if only he'd read the Bible more."²

Goethe's greatness offends complacent "dwarfs" of the Pustkuchen type, it hurts their piety, and they would gladly "shorten" him by a head at least.

Criticism of the squalid, conservative world of the Pustkuchens also meant criticism of the orthodox religious piety, which cultivated such persons, and this inevitably led to the questioning of religion itself.

In declaring war on the aggressive stupidity of the clergy in his epigrams of 1837, Marx was also declaring war on the "cold deity" itself—the supreme hypocrite and highest despot.

The break with the bourgeois, philistine world outlook could not be complete without a final break with religion. In its turn, consistent and merciless criticism of religion was impossible from idealist positions, it too was rooted in criticism of reality. Such was the inevitable logic of the path on which Karl Marx embarked.

At the end of the 1830s his attention, like that of his closest friends, the Young Hegelians from the Doctors' Club, was turned mainly to the criticism of religion. The philosophical attack on religion was

¹ Karl Marx, "Epigrams". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 579.

² Ibid., p. 578.

started by David Strauss' book *Das Leben Jesu*, published in 1835, in which the "divine infallibility" of the Gospels was refuted. Bruno Bauer, one of Marx's closest friends from the Doctors' Club, went even further and stated that there was not an atom of historical truth in all the four gospels.

At the same time Ludwig Feuerbach with his articles in the *Hallische Jahrbücher*, began the criticism of the Hegelian thesis on the unity of religion and philosophy from positions which quickly led him to materialism.

Another old friend of Marx's, Friedrich Köppen, fought for the rehabilitation of the traditions of the French and German Enlightenment of the 18th century. Köppen dedicated a pamphlet published by him in 1840 "To my friend Karl Marx of Trier".

Marx was the youngest member of the Doctors' Club, but in spite of this he soon occupied a prominent place among the professors and assistant professors. They sensed his exceptional intellect, his original power and independence of thought, and they could not fail to appreciate the unusual range of his spiritual interests, his boldness of judgement, and also his humour. Bruno Bauer, who was already an assistant professor and the acknowledged head of the Young Hegelian movement, wrote the student Marx friendly letters from Bonn, full of respect for his talent. He said that nothing could compare with the "intellectual interest" of the Doctors' Club¹, and confessed to Marx that he had never laughed as much "as in Berlin when I was just crossing the road with you".²

Karl Marx took an active part in the battle which the Young Hegelians were waging with religion. He

¹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 1, Halbband 2, S. 235.

² *Ibid.*, S. 236.

even wrote a polemic book against one of the professors of theology, but did not publish it. Nevertheless his ideas did not vanish without trace: they were taken up and developed by his elder colleagues. This can be seen from Köppen's admission to Marx in a letter. Laughing at himself, Köppen wrote in 1841 that since Karl left for Bonn he had finally found "some ideas of my own, independently thought-out, so to say" and not borrowed from Marx. Köppen remarks that Bruno Bauer's excellent article in the *Hallische Jahrbücher* was also indebted to Marx for its ideas. In his letter he says: "You see, you are a repository of thought, a workhouse, or, to put it like a Berliner, an ox-head of ideas."¹

Already in his student years Marx became the dominant influence among intellectually-minded young people. He stood on the extreme Left of the Left Hegelians, and even his friends regarded him as a "desperate revolutionary".²

Of course, it was still only a question of theoretical revolution, first and foremost, a "revolutionary" attitude towards religion. Here Marx indeed went considerably further than Bauer, Köppen and company. In his last three years as a student he advanced from protesting against religious hypocrisy to the downright rejection of religion as such. The Young Hegelian Georg Jung wrote to Arnold Ruge in 1841 that Marx said the Christian religion was "immoral", and that he, Bauer and Feuerbach were going to throw old Lord God out of the sky and take him to court.³

In his preparations to throw God out of the sky, to overthrow the idols of religion, Marx turned for sup-

¹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 1, Halbband 2, S. 257.

² *Ibid.*, S. 262.

³ *Ibid.*, S. 261-62.

port as early as 1838 to the great atheists of antiquity—Epicurus and Lucretius Carus. Their bold challenge to the gods appealed greatly to his searching at that period, and he shared completely their striving “to loose men’s minds from the tight knots of religion”¹ and thereby raise “God’s slave” to the heavens.

In his doctoral dissertation he quotes Lucretius’ splendid lines about Epicurus, “the greatest representative of Greek Enlightenment”.

Humana ante oculos foede cum vita iaceret
In terris oppressa gravi sub religione...
Primum Graius homo mortalis tollere contra.
Est oculus ausus primusque obsistere contra,
Quem neque fama deum nec fulmina nec minitanti
Murmure compressit caelum....
Quare religio pedibus subiecta vicissim
Obteritur, nos exaequat victoria caelo.²*

There is much in common between the age of Epicurus and the age of the “Sturm und Drang” on religion in Germany at the end of the 1830s. In Ancient Greece religion was attacked by others, as well as by Epicurus, but they did it in a cowardly and inconsistent way. The Stoics, for example, adapted the ancient religion in their own speculative fashion, just

¹ Karl Marx, “Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy”. Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 468.

² Karl Marx, “Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature”. Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 73.

* When human life lay grovelling in all men’s sight, crushed to the earth under the dead weight of religion,... a man of Greece was first to raise mortal eyes in defiance, first to stand erect and brave the challenge. Fables of the gods did not crush him, nor the lightning flash and growling menace of the sky.... Therefore religion in its turn lies crushed beneath his feet, and we by his triumph are lifted level with the skies.

as the Young Hegelians did. Marx praised Epicurus for not making concessions, not being "clever" or "cunning", but behaving like an "open atheist" and "directly attacking its (the world's) religion", thereby earning the abuse of the church fathers over many centuries.¹

In Germany there were many religious philosophers, including Hegel himself, who spoke of the great Greek atomists with contempt. The authority of Hegel did not deter the young Marx, although he was close to the Hegelians at that time, the authority of the truth always carried more weight with him than all other considerations. The truth was the only god worshipped by this cast-down of the complacent gods and idols of science and all "brahmins" of the spirit who contemplate reverently the navel of their own thoughts.

In the foreword to his dissertation Marx said that Hegel's "speculative" approach hindered the "giant thinker" from recognising in the Epicurean, Stoic and Sceptic systems their great importance for the history of Greek philosophy and for the Greek mind in general.²

Further on, talking about Plutarch who brought philosophy before the forum of religion, Marx in fact polemicalises with Hegel, or rather, with the Right wing of his supporters.

With regard to Hegel, Marx also criticises him in connection with the "proofs of the existence of God". Kant had already refuted these "proofs". But Hegel has turned them upside-down, that is, he has

¹ Marx, Engels, "The German Ideology", *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 142.

² Karl Marx, "Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 30.

rejected them in order to justify them. "What kind of clients are those whom the defending lawyer can only save from conviction by killing them himself?"¹ Marx remarks ironically.

Marx shows that the "proofs of the existence of God" are in fact proofs of the existence of a supreme human consciousness and, therefore, of the "non-existence of God". In fact, one of the "proofs" says that since nature has been well constructed—God exists. But the "reasonable" organisation of nature proves, on the contrary, the superfluity of God, the lack of need for God.

The true "proofs of the existence of God" should say: "Since nature has been badly constructed, God exists", "Because the world is without reason, therefore God exists", "Because there is no thought, there is God".

"But what does that say, except that, *for whom the world appears without reason ... for him God exists? Or lack of reason is the existence of God*"².

This conclusion was quite bold for its day.

Marx resolutely proclaimed human self-consciousness as the "highest divinity" and said, "It will have none other beside". Prometheus' bold confession, "In simple words, I hate the pack of gods" he directed "against all heavenly and earthly gods". This daring statement was not only of an anti-religious, but also of a political nature.

Bidding farewell to the student bench, Marx consciously issued a challenge to the "poor March hares", the wretched lackeys of the powers that be. Together

¹ Karl Marx, "Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 103.

² *Ibid.*, p. 105.

with Aeschylus' Prometheus who scornfully rejected Zeus' servant Hermes when the latter tried to persuade the fettered rebel to "see reason" and submit, Marx proclaimed to them:

Be sure of this, I would not change my state
Of evil fortune for your servitude.
Better to be the servant of this rock
Than to be faithful boy of Father Zeus.¹

The "poor March hares" were indeed shocked by the excessively "Leftist" position of Marx. Arnold Ruge wrote of Marx's Montagnardism. Even Bauer, who called for terrorism of theory, was frightened by Marx's challenge, tried to persuade him to tone down the daring foreword to his dissertation, suggested that he should ask the reactionary minister Eichhorn for pardon, and advised him to be cautious in the struggle and to spare the government.

But it was not in Marx's nature to heed such advice, no matter whom it came from: father or friends. Having thrown down the gauntlet to the heavenly and earthly gods, he by no means tried to limit himself to this. Once embarked upon the path of struggle, Marx was ready to battle on to the end, and none of his close acquaintances could guess how far he would go in this struggle.

His indomitable fighter's temperament was well described by the young Engels in his ironical heroic poem *The Triumph of Faith* written at the end of 1841. At the beginning he portrays Bruno Bauer:

He raves, a lanky villain in a coat of green;
Behind the leering face Hell's offspring can be seen.
He hoists his flag aloft, and in an arc up high
The sparks of his rude Bible criticisms fly

¹ Karl Marx, "Difference Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 31.

Then Marx appears:

Who runs up next with wild impetuosity?
A swarthy chap of *Trier*, a marked monstrosity.
He neither hops nor skips, but moves in leaps and
bounds,

Raving aloud. As if to seize and then pull down
To Earth the spacious tent of Heaven up on high,
He opens wide his arms and reaches for the sky.¹

The future showed that the life paths of Marx and Bruno Bauer, which crossed in 1841, when they worked together on the criticism of religion, were later to diverge sharply. With the years Bauer's theoretical "terrorism" became more and more loyal to the government, and then quite logically turned into the most faithful support of Bismarck who led the bourgeois reign of terror against the German Social-Democrats.

Already by 1843 Marx had gone further than Bauer in the criticism of religion. In articles published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* he showed that for a radical criticism of religion the philosophical refutation of religion was not enough.

One cannot "pull down the tent of heaven" if one is up in the clouds. One has to be down to earth. The roots of religion are "earthly" in origin. Religious mediocrity is an expression of the real mediocrity of social relations. It is engendered by them.

The humble meekness of "God's slaves" before the Most High is merely a false reflection of the servile, oppressed, dependent position of man in society, a reflection of the fact that social relations have not yet become truly humane.

"Religion is the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet found himself or has

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1975, p. 336.

already lost himself again".¹ It is the product of an inhuman world where man is ruled by forces alien to him.

The "inverted world" produces an "inverted" world outlook. In the vale of tears the man "who has not yet found himself" seeks consolation in illusory dreams of an afterlife. Because he is unhappy on earth, he reassures himself with sermons about the bliss of paradise.

Feeling weak and helpless in the struggle for his liberation and the struggle with nature, man invests God with power and omnipotence. Man seeks in God compensation for the wretchedness of his own existence. This is why the religion of that time is not only "the heart of a heartless world" and the "spirit of spiritless conditions" but also a protest against this world and these conditions.

The protest, however, is a passive one. It is merely the "sigh of the oppressed creature", poverty (social and individual) is not something opposed to the divine, but its indispensable attribute. The one engenders and determines the other.

The radical struggle against religion presupposes a struggle against "the world of which religion is the spiritual aroma". This is the struggle for the liberation of man from all forms of alienation, the struggle for his full-blooded development.

Bruno Bauer, and also Ludwig Feuerbach, stopped at the criticism of religion, whereas the "criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism"².

¹ Karl Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 175.

² Karl Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 175.

If, as Feuerbach held, man is himself the highest being for man, then, Marx concluded logically, *all relations* in which man is a debased, enslaved, forsaken, despicable being should be overthrown, relations which cannot be better described than by the exclamation of a Frenchman when it was planned to introduce a tax on dogs: "Poor dogs! They want to treat you like human beings!"¹

We have gone on ahead somewhat, in order to show the results of Marx's bold challenge to the gods which he issued in his doctoral dissertation. It was only one step from the conclusion of the dissertation that "lack of reason is the existence of god" to the conclusion on the need for the revolutionary transformation of the world "without reason". But it was this step which separated the radical Young Hegelian from the revolutionary.

The criticism of religion was only one of the directions which the development of the scientific world outlook of the young Marx took. His main interest in his later student years was philosophy. Marx's critical attitude towards religion was in itself largely determined by his philosophical development.

¹ Karl Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 182.

V

“There could be no headway without philosophy”

The first necessity for philosophical investigation is a bold, free mind.

KARL MARX¹

This statement by Marx, taken from the preparatory notebooks for his doctoral dissertation, might be paraphrased, because a philosophical training is an equally essential basis for a bold, free mind, that is, for independent theoretical thought. The best illustration of this is Marx himself.

We have already seen that as soon as he embarked upon independent theoretical studies in the field of jurisprudence he discovered that he was ill-equipped philosophically. He realised that he could not make any headway in a concrete sphere of theory without mastering the general forms in which theoretical thought is capable of advancing and of giving a faithful reproduction of a developing subject.

To use Hegel's well-known expression, the owl of Minerva--the symbol of wisdom--flies out at dusk, at the sunset of life, when all the everyday things are done, and thought surges to the summits of self-con-

¹ Karl Marx, “Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy”. Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 469.

sciousness, to make its soundless flight there, in the highest spheres, above the sleeping realm of the spirit.

This image can be interpreted to mean that the study of philosophy is a matter for old men who have grown wise from their experience of life. But this is not the case.

In the great laboratory of human culture, which moulds the young mind on its way to maturity, two spheres play an exceptional role, one might say. These are art and philosophy.

You can study mathematics without knowing physics (although it is not the best way), you can be a doctor without taking the trouble to learn about resistance of materials and you can invent technical gadgets without having an idea about astronomy. But you cannot be a cultured person without a knowledge of art and philosophy. I would even put it more categorically: without them you cannot achieve anything really creative in any concrete sphere of activity.

This statement may appear somewhat strange. Here we have the civilisation of the Earth, the fruit of the labours of preceding generations and the generation living today. There are towns—they were put up by builders and architects. There are canals, bridges and roads—they are the work of labourers and engineers. There are factories, machines, blast furnaces, machine tools, cars and lorries, aeroplanes, rockets—they are the product of the functional mind and hard work of scientists, designers, technicians, and workmen. The crops are ripening—they were grown by agronomists and farmers. All this is the pride and joy of mankind. It is the centre and core of human life. But where, in all this, do we find the labours of the philosophers?

What is the "practical" use of philosophy? Does it not come into the world with empty hands? Unlike the applied sciences its results are not embodied in

new machines or in more efficient technological processes. It does not discover powerful sources of energy and does not create synthetic materials or new medical preparations.

Evidently philosophy must be approached with different criteria than those used for the natural sciences. The utilitarian approach is unacceptable here, just as it is unacceptable in, say, assessing the social significance of works of art.

It is obviously absurd to ask what is the "practical" use of Phidias' *Venus*, Rodin's *Thinker*, Mozart's *Requiem* or Scriabin's *Poem of Ecstasy*.

Art ennobles and educates us, brings us aesthetic enjoyment, teaches us to love and hate, to perceive the world in colours and images. This is true. But there is an analogy with philosophy. Whereas art cultivates our feelings, develops our aesthetic perception of the world, philosophy (apart from its other important functions) cultivates the intellect, the ability for theoretical thinking. Whereas art teaches us to understand beauty, philosophy teaches us to think on the dialectical level.

Whereas the study of art develops the aesthetic aspect of thought, its ability to conjure up fantasies, to find unexpected links and associations, the study of philosophy develops our capacity to think, to make generalisations of the highest order, our capacity for dialectical flexibility of concepts, it teaches us to see an object not in isolation but as part of the world of many-sided systems of relations which are constantly changing.

Philosophy plays an exceptional role in the spiritual enrichment of the individual if only for the fact that it is, figuratively speaking, the quintessence of man's theoretical development which synthesises the results of earlier progress in knowledge.

Philosophy is not just the snowy summits of dis-

tant mountains which the tired traveller reaches at the end of his journey along the stony paths of knowledge. Philosophy is also the "mountaineering equipment" which helps him to gain a foothold on the almost sheer cliffs of bold hypotheses, to build a bridge of analogies and generalisations over the gulf which separates one phenomenon from another, to see the ledge which leads upward where no one else has seen it, which helps him to understand the limited possibilities of the enticing path of empirical wandering in the lowland, the path which, at best, leads forward but not upward.

In other words, the study of philosophy is not only the assimilation of knowledge in its perfected and enriched form, but also an exercise of the intellect, and youth is the best time for training the capacity for theoretical thought. In preparing for his doctoral dissertation, Marx copied the following passage from Epicurus: "Let not him who is young delay philosophising."¹

Only the vulgarity of the philistine mind sees philosophy as a useless occupation. The philistine attitude to philosophy can be compared to the attitude of Socrates' peevish wife, the immortal Xanthippe, to her husband, the "image and teacher of the world" (Marx). Xanthippe never tired of abusing him and literally flinging mud at him for neglecting the household and refusing to concern himself with the prosperity of his family for the sake of "idle talk". She was infuriated by the fact that while other less capable and less clever husbands gained a high position, honours and riches, her Socrates went barefoot, in a patched tunic, and even refused the modest payment for his teaching which his pupils offered him.

¹ Karl Marx, "Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 488.

The fact that philosophy, unlike the concrete sciences and arts, has the special aim of teaching man to think, does not appear as a merit to human "common sense". On the contrary, the philistine tends to see it more as a defect, for he has no use for theoretical thought. In his eyes it makes a person eccentric, "not of this world".

Human common sense, writes Marx in the notebooks for his dissertation, "believes it has the right to counterpose to the philosophers its most foolish trivialities and commonplaces as a *terra incognita*. It thinks itself a Columbus when it stands eggs on end".¹

The philistine thinks there is nothing easier than philosophising, and he himself is given to engaging in "profound philosophy in shallow places" which amounts to the preaching of moral sermons and table talk about everything under the sun.

At best, the "common sense" approach to philosophy consists usually of mastering a certain number of philosophical concepts, and learning the laws and categories by heart just as one learns laws and formulae in physics or mathematics. But this "knowledge" is even less useful than a knowledge of multiplication tables is for research in the field of higher mathematics.

The exact sciences begin at the point where it is a question of fixed, indisputable, empirically proved truths. Philosophy *ends* at the point where it seeks to proclaim final truths in the last instance.

One cannot learn to think theoretically by studying the ready-made results of any single philosophical system. It is essential to study the whole history of philosophy as the history of the progres-

¹ Karl Marx, "Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 444.

sion of human thought in its abstract forms.

Lenin wrote that it is impossible to understand Marx's *Capital* without having thoroughly studied and understood *the whole* of Hegel's *Logic*. But likewise it is also impossible to understand Hegel's *Logic* completely without the philosophy of Schelling, Fichte, Kant, Leibniz, Spinoza, Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Democritus and Heraclitus.

Even more important is the fact that without mastering the whole history of philosophical and social thought it was impossible to *overcome* Hegel's *Logic*, to go further than Hegel, to create a new philosophy. Moving within the framework of the Hegelian system, interpreting its theses, considering first this aspect, then that aspect of his teaching, the Young Hegelians of the 1830s found themselves in a vicious circle and could not take a single important step forward. They seriously debated the question of what would happen to the world after the World Spirit had reached its goal in Hegelian philosophy—self-knowledge.

Marx was never an orthodox Hegelian. We have seen that at first his attitude towards Hegel's teaching was to something that he even "hated". But this did not prevent him from studying Hegel with all the thoroughness and care of which he was capable. He rendered Hegel his due as a great thinker, but did not make an idol of him. There was much in Hegel that he continued to find unacceptable, above all, the claims to absolute truth and a complete system.

His doctoral dissertation reflects this philosophical position of the young Marx, a position which demonstrates his advance from Hegel, through Hegel to overcome Hegel.

The spirit of doubt and negation led Marx in his quest to the sources of philosophical thought. He embarked on a study of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle

and studied numerous texts of other classical authors: Diogenes, Laertius, Plutarch, Simplicius, Philistus, Cicero, Stobaeus, Philoponus, Lucretius Carus and Sextus Empiricus.

But in all the diversity of trends and doctrines in Greek philosophy, Marx concentrated his attention on Democritus and Epicurus, the great Greek materialists. This move to an analysis of the teachings of the materialists was in itself a challenge to Hegel and his orthodox followers. It showed the direction which the search for a new philosophy was taking.

Hegel could not be overcome within the framework of idealism, and none of the idealistic doctrines could help in this respect. Only materialism could be of use here.

The doctoral dissertation does not testify to Marx's transition to a materialist position, but it does bear witness to his dissatisfaction with idealism, which divorced philosophy from reality and led it into the sphere of speculation. As a result a gulf was formed between philosophy and the "world", between thought and action. The "world" was alien to philosophy and philosophy was alien to the "world". "Inspired by the urge to realise itself", philosophy "enters into tension against the other".

At the same time as "the world" becomes philosophical, philosophy desires to become "worldly". And this means that the "inner self-contentment and completeness" which was inherent in Hegelian philosophy has been broken.

Hegelian philosophy begins to collapse in the teachings of the Hegelians. "That which in the first place appears as an inverted (*verkehrtes*) relationship and inimical trend of philosophy with respect to the world, becomes in the second place a diremption of individual self-consciousness in itself and appears finally as an external separation and duality of philo-



Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

sophy, as two opposed philosophical trends".¹

Marx pours deadly sarcasm on the servile and dependent followers of Hegel. These subordinate figures, void of all individuality, usually hide "behind a philosophical giant of the past—but the ass is soon detected under the lion's skin; the whimpering voice of a manikin of today or yesterday blubbers in comical contrast to the majestic voice resounding through the ages".²

With sarcastic strokes Marx draws the figure of a Lilliputian armed with double spectacles who stands on the posterior of a giant and announces to the world the astonishingly novel vista his point of view opens up, and makes himself ridiculous explaining that the point of Archimedes has been found, not in a flowing heart, but in "the solid substantial ground" on which he stands. "Thus we obtain hair—, nail—, toe—, excrement-philosophers and others...."³

Here Marx is attacking, on the one hand, the poverty-stricken position of the Right-wing Hegelians, and, on the other, the cult of Hegel, the elevation of his teaching into an absolute, the argument that the subsequent development of philosophy was to proceed merely along the road of the interpretation of various features and aspects of Hegelian philosophy.

In this respect the fate of Hegel's philosophy can be compared with the historical fate of Aristotle's philosophy, which mediaeval commentators completely emasculated. Aristotle's ideas were turned into a kind of prayer book, his authority was used to sup-

¹ Karl Marx, "Differences Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. I, p. 86.

² Ibid., p. 87.

³ Ibid.

port the authority of religious faith. Belief in his infallibility reached absurd limits. It is said, for example, that when a Jesuit professor in the 17th century was invited to look through a telescope to convince himself that there were spots on the sun, he replied to the astronomer Kircher: "It is useless, my son. I have read Aristotle twice from beginning to end, and I have not found the slightest hint of spots on the sun there. Consequently such spots cannot exist."

This "prayerful" attitude to philosophy, even if it is the philosophy of "giants" did not satisfy Marx's critical mind. "Least of all," he wrote, "must a philosophy be accepted as a philosophy by virtue of an authority or of good faith, be the authority even that of a people and the faith that of centuries."¹ This is why, according to Marx, the first necessity for philosophical investigation is a bold, free mind which does not rest content with what it has achieved, which creatively analyses the legacy of the past and strives for new achievements.

This is why philosophy is incomparable with religion. It will not tolerate the cult of supreme authority based on faith and blind worship.

In Hegel Marx sees a thinker of the same stature as Aristotle, and in the fate of post-Aristotelean philosophy (Epicurean, Stoic and Sceptic) he sees something in common with the fate of post-Hegelian philosophy. Whereas the Right-wing Hegelians tried to prove the superiority of religion to philosophy and, like the "blessed" Plutarch, brought philosophy before the "forum of religion", Marx champions the "supreme authority" of philosophy. "Philosophy, as long as a drop of blood shall pulse in its world-subdu-

¹ Karl Marx, "Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 506.

ing and absolutely free heart, will never grow tired of answering its adversaries with the cry of Epicurus: 'Not the man who denies the gods worshipped by the multitude, but he who affirms of the gods what the multitude believes about them, is truly impious.'"¹

Post-Aristotelean philosophy was the crowning point of Greek philosophy. It heralded the decline of the slave-owning world and the beginning of a new epoch. Post-Hegelian philosophy was in the same historical position. It confronted "a world torn apart". Its "harps" were "Aeolian harps" the strings of which were plucked by the storm. "But one must not let oneself be misled by this storm which follows a great philosophy, a world philosophy."²

This expectation of a "storm", the expectation of a new "titanic" age is very characteristic of Marx's frame of mind in the late 1830s and early 1840s, when Germany had begun to awake from its sleep, when the revival began of its economic, political and intellectual life, which foreshadowed the revolutionary upheaval of 1848.

Marx's "pre-storm" mood during the writing of his dissertation was, of course, still very vague and remote from real politics. It found expression merely in the diffuse categories of idealist philosophy. But it was like a fuse which burns slowly yet leads to an explosion.

It is characteristic that in predicting a "storm" Marx attacks the cowardly position of those Hegelians "who understand our master wrongly", who think that "*mediocrity* is the normal manifestation of

¹ Karl Marx, "Differences Between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 30.

² Karl Marx, "Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 491.

the absolute spirit". He criticises the views of "half-hearted minds" who think that the discord between philosophy and "the world" can be put right "by a peace treaty with the real needs", "by cutting the armed forces, by splitting them up".¹

This "splitting up" is expressed, in particular, in the withdrawal of philosophy from important problems into the world of self-consciousness, a situation very similar to the post-Aristotelean one. Thus, for example, Marx compares Epicurean, Stoic philosophy to a moth. "When the universal sun has gone down, the moth seeks the lamplight of the private individual."²

However, here Marx sees not only the negative, but also a most attractive aspect: concern for the individual, for its spiritual world, for problems of ethics, i.e., that which characterised Greek humanism. From this point of view his attention to the personality of Socrates is of special interest. In Socrates the young Marx was attracted by the "ideal" image of the wise man who succeeded in linking philosophy with everyday life, who brought philosophy into the streets and squares of ancient Athens. "The reason why Socrates is so important is that the relation of Greek philosophy to the Greek spirit, and therefore its inner limit, is expressed in him."³

Socrates had little interest in wisdom which aimed at understanding nature, understanding the cosmos. How can man know anything about the world and the universe, if he knows nothing about himself? "Know thyself" is the initial principle of Socratic philosophy.

¹ Karl Marx, "Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy" Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 491, 492.

² Ibid., p. 492.

³ Ibid., pp. 438-439.

The most important things which man should understand are: what are good and evil? What is beauty? What is justice? What are life and death? What is love and what is pleasure?

People think that these are very ordinary and simple things unworthy of philosophical wisdom. It is here that Socrates employs his irony and his dialectics. He is ready to argue with anyone who wishes and, pretending to be a simpleton who wants to gain wisdom from others, he asks naive but cunning questions which reveal the ignorance of his complacent interlocutor, the latter's inability to think dialectically, to understand that one and the same action may be good or bad depending on the point of view and the circumstances.

Socrates' irony (Marx and Engels themselves frequently had recourse to irony in their polemic battles) is, to quote Marx's apt remark, the "mid-wifery" with the help of which theoretical thought is born and matures.

Socrates' irony is a "dialectic trap" for "human common sense" with its "self-complacent knowing-better". This irony, to Marx's mind, is characteristic of all philosophy which challenges the "common consciousness".¹

Socrates is "philosophy personified", firstly, in the sense that in him philosophy appears realised, *embodied in life*, in practice, and, secondly, in that it is the philosophy of the individual human self-consciousness. For this reason Marx sees its historically conditioned limitations, its "subjectivity", its turning into itself. But on the personal, human level, evidently, it was Socrates who provided the young Marx with the ideal image of the wise man, the consistent and

¹ Karl Marx, "Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 494.

honest philosopher who, in fact, sentenced himself to death, for this decision proceeded logically from his inner convictions.

It is to Socrates more than to any other that Marx's idea that philosophers "themselves are living images, living works of art"¹, living exponents of the systems and theories created by them, applies. A philosopher's personality, in the opinion of the young Marx, is quite inseparable from his teaching.

From this point of view it is interesting to see how Marx describes Democritus, Epicurus and Plutarch in his doctoral dissertation and preparatory materials for it. In his attitude to these philosophers and what he likes and dislikes in them, features of the personality of the young Marx are revealed.

Democritus and Epicurus are two philosophers whose theories were always regarded as identical or almost identical. Marx shows that this is not correct. Although they both propounded the atomistic theory and developed it in the same way, they were diametrically opposed in everything relating to the truth, authenticity and application of this theory. They were even opposed in their attitude to learning.

Democritus expressed the principle of his life and searchings as follows: "I would rather discover a new aetiology than acquire the Persian crown."² In all things he seeks logic and rejects chance which "is

¹ Karl Marx, "Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 436.

² *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Democritus is the first encyclopaedian mind among the Greeks. He is one of the founders of atomistic philosophy. According to Democritus there are two prime beginnings: atoms and the void. Although all the material for cognition is provided by the senses, they yield no more than a "dim" knowledge of things. This is transcended by another, "bright", more subtle knowledge, knowledge by reason. This knowledge in its analysis arrives at the discovery of atoms and the void.

incompatible with sound thinking". He is plagued by constant dissatisfaction with the knowledge he has attained. He travels to Egypt to learn geometry and to the Chaldeans in Persia, and some maintain that he even visited India and acquired wisdom from the gymnosophists (Yogi).

This encyclopaedian mind of his age created a most viable, speculative theory of the universe, atomistics, which in its main features has been borne out by the whole subsequent development of knowledge over the centuries. Yet he remained dissatisfied. And it is said that he blinded himself so that the sensuous light of the eye would not darken the sharpness of intellect.

Epicurus was a quite different person, with a different attitude to philosophy. Whereas Democritus sought to acquire wisdom from all, Epicurus prided himself on not having had a teacher, on being self-taught and finding his way to the truth without any assistance. Democritus' restless spirit drove him to all parts of the world and he spent eighty years in foreign lands, whereas Epicurus left his garden in Athens only two or three times and that was to visit friends. He found peace and happiness in philosophy and, unlike Democritus, rejected the exact sciences. Despairing of acquiring knowledge of all things, Democritus blinded himself, but Epicurus, feeling the hour of death approaching, took a warm bath, called for pure wine and recommended his friends to be faithful to philosophy.

Epicurus had complete trust in the sensuous perception of the appearance of phenomena. And therefore whereas the sun seemed enormous to Democritus, to Epicurus it seemed about two feet large, i.e., the size which it *appears* to us.

The necessity which Democritus hopes to see in everything is rejected by Epicurus. He regards necessi-

ty as a manifestation of the inevitable destiny, fate, which oppress man. He links it with religion and the gods which predetermine all man's actions. Man's behaviour should depend on him himself, on *chance*, not on necessity.

To live in necessity is, according to Epicurus, a misfortune, but such a life is by no means a necessity. The paths to freedom are open on all sides, they are many, short and easy, one must simply subdue necessity. He believed that one must recognise "chance... not God". In complete accordance with this Epicurus unlike Democritus introduces the accidental deviation of atoms in his atomistic theory.

Marx was the first to prove (and herein lies the lasting scientific value of his dissertation) that Epicurean chance deviation of atoms is not worthy only of ridicule, as many thought, but is an innovation which added considerably to atomistic theory and helped it to develop. That to which Marx, governed by his dialectical intuition, drew attention, has been borne out experimentally, one might say, by modern sub-atomic physics, which advanced the uncertainty principle.

Epicurean philosophy—the philosophy of atheism and Greek enlightenment which extolled the free man who delights in the simple and natural joys of life—was frequently subjected to the embittered criticism of philosophical hypocrites and philistines.

At the forefront of these critics is the "blessed" Plutarch, whom Marx regarded as the embodiment of "self-satisfied stupidity", "swaggering respectability which thinks itself clever".

Marx scornfully contrasts the consistent, honest, bold logic of Epicurus' argument, a logic which is not afraid of its own conclusions even if they lead to the rejection of religion, with the cowardly, half-hearted, eclectic position of Plutarch, his god-fearing, moralising talk, his hypocritical unctuousness.

Plutarch's argument is a classic example of the cheap "philosophy" of the mediocre mind which seeks satisfaction in its own "piety", "virtues", in its concern for well-being and "eternal bliss" in the other world, a "philosophy" which covers the poverty and degradation of its own paltry "ego" with the snow and ice of morality. The figure of Plutarch is associated in Marx's mind with a man who is contorted with fear, cringes servilely and preaches about "how unjust it is that the good should lose with life the fruit of their life".¹ Naturally Plutarch denigrates all violations of "decorum" in the field of thought. Reading Plutarch makes us feel that we are sitting in a stuffy "classroom". Reading Epicurus and Lucretius, that "fresh, keen, poetic master of the world", we see an intrepid acrobat in gay clothing and we forget ourselves, rise above ourselves, see further and breathe more freely.

Well, to each his own. "He who would not prefer to build the whole world out of his own resources, to be a creator of the world, rather than to be eternally bothering about himself, has already been anathematised by the spirit, he is under an interdict, but in the opposite sense; he is expelled from the temple and deprived of the eternal enjoyment of the spirit and left to sing lullabies about his own private bliss and to dream about himself at night."²

Marx's polemic with Plutarch was, of course, also a polemic with all his spiritual heirs in philosophy of whom there were always plenty.

The pompous verbiage of the Plutarchists, the "blessed" arch-roguers of learning, who spin a web of moralising prohibitions and patriotic sermons to entrap and lull to sleep vital, palpitating thought,

¹ Karl Marx, "Notebooks on Epicurean Philosophy". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 468.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 468-69.

remained sharply antipathetical to Marx. With the point of his pen he nailed to the pillory of history all manifestations of "moralising criticism and critical morality" in the spirit of Plutarch.

Thus, the petty-bourgeois democrat Karl Heinzen in his polemic with Engels in the 19th century personified this "criticism" as vividly as Plutarch in his polemic with Epicurus some two thousand years earlier.

In the person of Heinzen Marx lashed with merciless wit and irony "the philistine as critic" who boasts proudly that his school was not philosophy or learning, but the "fullness of life", who preaches "sound common sense", demonstrates "the self-satisfied philistine's consciousness of his own virtue", turns a few "meagre, bony" truths into unshakeable dogmas and pours out "its moral indignation about the 'blindness', 'foolishness' or 'wickedness' of the opponents of such articles of faith".¹

This sharply negative assessment by Marx of all followers of Plutarch reveals most clearly his positive attitude to science, his understanding of the tasks and role of true philosophical thought.

Philosophy is incompatible with dogma, with set, ossified theses. It was the finality, completeness, the absolute and "speculative" nature of the Hegelian system which did not satisfy Marx. We have seen how, already in his doctoral dissertation, he directed the full force of his criticism against the breach of Hegelian philosophy with "the world", reality.

This initial idea of his early philosophical position contained an explosive fuse and soon led Marx to far-reaching conclusions about philosophy.

Because of the insufficient development of the na-

¹ Karl Marx, "Moralising Criticism and Critical Morality". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 313, 317, 321.

tural sciences, philosophy was compelled for the time being to act as a substitute for the exact sciences. It laid claim to be a universal theory of the world, the queen of sciences. This claim is expressed to the fullest in Hegelian philosophy. And this is why the Hegelian system was the *completion* of philosophy in the old conception, its crown, its sum total, and its conclusion.

Marx realised fully even in his later student years that philosophy, the "queen of sciences" reigning in the inaccessible realms of the spirit, was confronted with the need to come down to earth. At that time, however, he was not yet a communist or even a revolutionary democrat, and had not yet defined his position in politics clearly. It was only natural, therefore, that his idea of the "world" and of the forms of uniting philosophy with the "world" were rather abstract.

Some three years later we find Marx at work on his *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law*. In the introduction he formulated the thesis on the relation of philosophy to the "world" with all the fullness and firmness of the revolutionary view of the world.

Revolution, Marx states, "begins in the brain of the *philosopher*" which reflects maturing contradictions. But the weapon of theoretical criticism cannot replace "criticism by weapons". Theory becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses.¹ Consequently, in order to become a material force, philosophy must act as the philosophy of the revolutionary class, that is, the proletariat.

"As philosophy finds its *material* weapons in the

¹ Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 182.

proletariat, so the proletariat finds its *spiritual* weapons in philosophy. And once the lightning of thought has squarely struck this ingenuous soil of the people the emancipation of the *Germans* into *human beings* will take place".¹

However, "the prevailing", that is to say, Hegelian philosophy, itself possesses the defects of the reality which is to be superseded. Hence, it is impossible to "*make philosophy a reality without superseding it*".² And preceding philosophy was in fact superseded by Marx and Engels. This "superseding" did not mean a simple rejection, it meant a revolution as a result of which a smiting "sword of the Nibelungs", the method of materialist dialectics, was forged on the basis of the whole of classical philosophy, first and foremost, on the heritage of Hegel and Feuerbach. This method found splendid embodiment in the theory of scientific communism, which is the true battle slogan of the proletariat, its mighty weapon in the struggle for the liberation of mankind and the building of a society worthy of man.

In full accordance with Marx's forecast the proletariat of the twentieth century is superseding itself as the oppressed, indigent class, turning Marxist philosophy into reality.

* * *

Let us return to the young Marx, however, and summarise his spiritual development up to the time of his graduation from Berlin University.

¹ Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 187.

² *Ibid.*, p. 181.

His doctoral dissertation testifies to his atheist convictions. Consistent atheism is, as we know, incompatible with idealism. It inevitably leads to materialism. In his dissertation Marx does not yet break with the heritage of idealist philosophy, but he is already turning his attention to the materialism and enlightened humanism of Greek philosophy.

It should be borne in mind here that Marx was preparing his dissertation for publication and could not express himself with complete frankness on many questions because of the censorship.

In his spiritual development Marx had outgrown the Young Hegelians. Although he was still an unknown young scholar who had not published a single academic work, the superiority of his intellect was acknowledged even by the most outstanding figures in the Young Hegelian movement.

The testimony of Moses Hess, the future "true socialist", is of particular interest in this respect. By 1841 Hess was already a well-known publicist and philosopher. By then he had made a quite resolute, although not entirely consistent, attempt to link Hegelian philosophy with French socialism and had proclaimed the communist revolution in a vague, semi-mystical form, like the coming of the Messiah. Nevertheless, Moses Hess regarded the recently graduated Karl Marx as infinitely superior to himself in terms of philosophical development and predicted a great future for him with remarkable perspicacity.

In a letter of September 2, 1841, to his friend Auerbach he writes: "You will be pleased to make the acquaintance here of a man who now also belongs to our friends, although he lives in Bonn, where he is soon to teach.... It is a phenomenon which, in spite of the fact that I am engaged in the same field, made a great impression on me; in short, you should prepare to make the acquaintance of the greatest, perhaps the

only real living philosopher, who will shortly attract the eyes of Germany to himself, when he makes a public appearance (in print or from the rostrum). Both in his tendency and in his philosophical education he is superior not only to *Strauss*, but also to *Feuerbach*, and the latter means a great deal! —If I could be in Bonn, when he lectures on logic, I would be his most diligent auditor. I have always wanted such a man as my teacher in philosophy. Now I feel what a dabbler I am in real philosophy. But patience! I shall learn something yet!

“Dr. Marx, as my idol is called, is still a very young man (twenty-four at the most), who will deliver the final blow to mediaeval religion and politics. He combines the sharpest wit with the most profound philosophical gravity; imagine Rousseau, Voltaire, Holbach, Lessing, Heine and Hegel united in one person; I say *united*, not mixed together—and you have Dr. Marx.”¹

Possibly Hess was acquainted with writings of the young Marx which have not survived, or perhaps his opinion was based on conversations with him, but his forecast was remarkably accurate. Marx was preparing himself inwardly for the creation of a revolutionary philosophy. The genius of theoretical thought was rapidly developing and revealing itself in him.

¹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 1., Halbband, 2, S. 260-61.

VI

“Merciless criticism of reality”

The people must be taught to be
terrified at itself in order to give it
courage.¹

KARL MARX¹

Having acquired the long-awaited diploma of doctor of philosophy, Marx travelled to his native Trier in the spring of 1841, and from there to Bonn, where Bruno Bauer had been inviting him for some time.

2. In Trier the break took place between Marx and his relatives and mother, who regarded her son as a spendthrift and failure and refused to give him a share of his father's legacy. Disagreements also arose between Marx's mother and the Westphalen family. Jenny suffered greatly from this. Marx was tormented by the knowledge that he could not link his destiny with her because he did not have the means to support a family.

In spite of this emotional drama, which continued right up to Marx's marriage, he was full of strength, vigour and enthusiasm. He burned with the desire to find a fitting application for his talent and knowledge

¹ Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 178.

and wished to play an active part in political life.

Marx was twenty-three, but the respectable diploma of doctor of philosophy did not seem to add any "respectability" to this buoyant young man always ready as ever to play a trick and laugh at the vicissitudes of fortune.

As before, Marx was the heart and soul of merry gatherings, a person with whom one could unburden one's heart and laugh heartily, while running the risk of being struck by a "heartless shower" of subtle gibes which were not always good-natured or inoffensive. His humour became cold and merciless at the slightest manifestation of moral turpitude, servility and grovelling. Here even the title of "best friend" was of no avail.

Marx made various plans for independent activity. In the spring of 1841, together with Bruno Bauer, he conceived the idea of founding a radical journal entitled *Archiv des Atheismus*. Arnold Ruge, one of the leaders of the liberal bourgeoisie, who at that time published the radical *Deutsche Jahrbücher*, wrote in this connection in September 1841: "I am having a bad time now, because B. Bauer and Karl Marx and Christiansen and Feuerbach are going to proclaim, or have already proclaimed Montagnardism and hoisted the flag of atheism and mortality. God, religion and immortality will be deposed, and people proclaimed as gods. A journal of atheism is to appear and a hullabaloo will take place, if the police let things come to a head, which, however, cannot be helped."¹

This plan was not realised, however. Marx's hopes of obtaining a professorship in Bonn were also dashed, for under pressure of reactionary criticism Bruno Bauer was dismissed from his teaching post,

¹ A. Cornu, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels. Leben und Werk*, Bd. 1, S. 245.

and it became quite clear that Marx stood even less chance of obtaining a place there.

All this does not appear to have worried Marx unduly. The sober life of the academic did not appeal to him. The example of Ludwig Feuerbach, who withdrew to the seclusion of the countryside with his beloved wife and cut himself off from the rest of the world behind the thick walls of Bruckberg Castle in order to engage in the peaceful contemplation of nature and lyrical philosophising did not inspire Marx, although he soon became for a while an ardent supporter of Feuerbach's "anthropological" materialism.

Marx longed for activity which would promote the union of philosophy and reality in practice. This striving to combine theoretical studies with "involvement in life itself" is reflected even in his gymnasium essay on the choice of a profession and grew stronger with the years of university study. It was assisted by the development of Marx's political attitudes, his growing and deepening conviction that existing social reality was unreasonable, squalid, and in need of revolutionary change.

It is usually thought that in his university years Marx stood aside from politics and immersed himself entirely in "pure" theory. And that only after his graduation from university did he suddenly turn to vital political questions. This was evidently not the case. We have seen that many poems of 1837 reflect his decisive break with the philistine world. Also at this time he attended exceptionally diligently the lectures of Eduard Gans, who openly propagated the ideas of Saint-Simon and called for the emancipation of labour. Marx soon struck up a personal acquaintance with Gans. Also in 1837 Marx referred to Adolf Rutenberg as his very close friend. The latter had once been arrested as a member of the Burschen-

schaft and was under police surveillance as the author of "ill-intentioned articles".

Marx's close association with Bruno Bauer was also dictated by the fact that the latter was seeking to elaborate a "philosophy of action" capable of influencing the course of history. Marx saw the criticism of religion which was being made by Bauer and Feuerbach as the only possible form of political criticism at that time.

Moreover the theoretical criticism which satisfied Bauer often seemed lacking to Marx even in his final student years. Evidently this divergence explains the interesting phrase in Bauer's letter to Marx of March 31, 1841: "It would be madness for you to devote yourself to a practical career. Theory is now the strongest practice, and we cannot foretell in what large sense it will become practical."¹

Meanwhile historical events in Germany were developing in such a way that political problems were beginning to come to the fore both in theory and in life itself.

In the summer of 1840 a new king ascended the Prussian throne—Friedrich Wilhelm IV, from whom everyone expected liberal reforms and a constitution. A lover of fine words and expansive gestures, he encouraged vain hopes for freedom. In fact, however, the new king pursued a policy of "reactionary romanticism", concerning himself with strengthening the power of the monarchy and the Christian Church.

Marx, as he himself wrote later, immediately recognised the new monarch's "value and his role": this "king of the philistines" at his coronation "declared that his heart and his turn of mind would be the

¹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 1, Halbband 2, S. 250.

future fundamental law".¹ He spoke cynically of Prussia as his "realm" and of the German people as children who had not come of age and who had to be educated with the birch and gingerbread.

The birch was reserved primarily for the bold Young Hegelians who dared to wage a struggle against religion. Eminent Young Hegelians were removed from the universities. In order to provide a theoretical refutation of Hegelianism, the old, half-senile idealist philosopher Schelling was invited to Berlin.

The illusions vanished as quickly as they had appeared. The Young Hegelians who had been restrained opponents of the Prussian state began to move quickly to the Left themselves now that they had lost all hope of the monarchy moving Left.

The liberal democratic movement in the country grew stronger and people's political consciousness began to awake. As industry developed in Germany and the national bourgeoisie grew stronger, the patriarchal, feudal aspirations of the monarchy became increasingly obsolete.

At this time Marx was preparing for what was for him a new type of activity. At the end of 1841 he wrote that "political and philosophical pursuits of an entirely different nature do not permit me now to think"² of realising former plans in the field of the study of Greek philosophy.

What were these activities? First and foremost, Marx was anxious to settle a score with religion and was writing his treatise on Christian art. But his political aspirations expressed themselves far more definitely in a work dedicated to a critique of the He-

¹ Karl Marx, "Letters from the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 139.

² Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Bd. 1, Halbband 1, S. XXXIV.

gelian concept of the state which Marx began to write at this time.

Whereas for Hegel, as for the Young Hegelians also, the ideal was a constitutional monarchy, Marx declared war on this "hybrid", to quote his own words, which "from beginning to end contradicts and abolishes itself".¹

This statement, made at the beginning of March 1842, testifies to Marx's political radicalism. He saw the solution not in the liberalisation of the existing monarchic order, but in its abolition. Marx writes with hatred of statesmen calling them "overassured scoundrels", "experienced fops", whose policy of government is based on the principle of "the degradation of people to the level of animals".²

Marx decided to wage his first open battle with the Prussian monarchy in his articles on the freedom of the press ("Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction" and "Debates on Freedom of the Press"). This question attracted Marx's attention because freedom of the press is an indication of political freedom in general and "the absence of freedom of the press makes all other freedoms illusory".³

At the end of 1841 a new censorship instruction was published. This document crystallised all the sham liberal hypocrisy of the king's policies which claimed to be progressive, but were in fact reactionary.

At a time when there was universal rejoicing in the camp of the bourgeois liberals at the appearance of this instruction, Marx tore the veil of fine words from it and revealed mercilessly the pathetic poverty of the

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 382-83.

² *Ibid.*, p. 384.

³ Karl Marx, "Debates on Freedom of the Press". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 180.

freedoms conferred by "divine authority".

Marx formulated the principles of his criticism of bourgeois reality as follows: "I am referring to *ruthless criticism of all that exists*, ruthless both in the sense of not being afraid of the results it arrives at and in the sense of being just as little afraid of conflict with the powers that be."¹

These statements by Marx characterise him not only politically but also morally. They enable us to form an impression of the criteria which the young Marx applied to research work, to academic study.

Marx was striving for profound and consistent revelation of the truth, for bold and resolute pursuit of the logic of things, for that "universal liberality of thought which reacts to *each thing* according to *the latter's essential nature*".² No external considerations should divert the seeker after truth. "Is it not the first duty of the seeker after truth to aim directly at the truth, without looking to the right or left? Will I not forget the essence of the matter, if I am obliged not to forget to state it in the prescribed form?"³

In scientific research the important thing is not only the result but also the path which leads to it, and here the inner disposition of the scholar is taken into account: the end which requires unjust means is not a just end. Cowardice, half-heartedness in science is the betrayal of science.

In an article on debates on the freedom of the press, Marx returns to this idea in even more definite form.

¹ Karl Marx, "Letters from the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 142.

² Karl Marx, "Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 113.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

Scholarship, like writing in general, is not a "trade". It should not sink to the level of a trade. "The writer, of course, must earn in order to be able to live and write, but he must by no means live and write to earn.

"When Béranger sings:

Je ne vis que pour faire des chansons,
Si vous m'ôtez ma place Monseigneur,
Je ferai des chansons pour vivre,¹

this threat contains the ironic admission that the poet deserts his proper sphere when for him poetry becomes a means.

"The writer does not at all look on his work as a *means*. It is an *end in itself*; it is so little a means for him himself and for others that, if need be, he sacrifices *his* existence to *its* existence."²

Marx expressed his own creative creed in these words. By his whole life he confirmed that he had never "composed songs in order to live", but rather sacrificed his private life to the search for scientific truth.

Marx did not confine himself to satirical ridicule of the sham liberalism of the new king's instructions. He revealed the social essence of the system which permitted laws "against a frame of mind". He shows that these laws are possible only in an anti-popular regime, "in a society in which *one* organ imagines itself the sole, exclusive possessor of state reason and state morality, in a government which opposes the people in

¹ I live only to compose songs.
If you dismiss me, Monseigneur,
I shall compose songs in order to live.— *Tr.*

² Karl Marx, "Debates on Freedom of the Press". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 174-75.

principle...."¹

Only "the bad conscience of a faction invents ... *laws of revenge*, laws against a frame of mind". "Laws against a frame of mind are based on an unprincipled frame of mind, on an immoral, material view of the state".²

Marx arrives at the revolutionary idea that by issuing anti-popular laws the "faction" is placing itself *outside the law*, that its actions which are aimed at strengthening the state are actually of an anti-state nature.

Here Marx is still criticising the state from an abstract philosophical position. He is only beginning to approach an understanding of its class-historical essence. A step towards this understanding is his concentration of attention on the objective, independent of the individual nature of the state.

The real reason for the actions of the state officials, as Marx shows, lies not in the peculiarities of this or that person, not in their frame of mind, it is an expression of "the reverse world".

If a government is anti-popular, all its acts, even "good" ones, turn into their opposite. In seeking to confirm the "law", it is compelled to have recourse to lawlessness, to violation of the law. It elevates arbitrariness to law. In depriving the press of the right to criticise, it imposes on government officials the duty of criticism.

In defending "individuals", it belittles the individual, deprives it even of the right to its own opinion. In seeking to enhance national feeling, such a govern-

¹ Karl Marx, "Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 120.

² *Ibid.*

ment itself "is based on a view that humiliates the nation".

The government instruction demands "unlimited trust in the estate of officials, and it proceeds from unlimited distrust in the estate of non-officials".

The Prussian official acts in the role of "guardian", he is entrusted with the "control of the mind". And not the slightest doubt arises as to whether he has the scientific qualification to pass judgment of scientific qualification of every kind.¹

Marx reveals the inner irony of this bureaucratic principle. In order to judge thinking people competently, the official must be superior to them in all spheres. Perhaps "a crowd of universal geniuses known to the government" really does live in Prussia. But if so why do not these "encyclopaedic minds" come forward as writers and scientists? Why do not these officials, overwhelming in their numbers and mighty owing to their scientific knowledge and genius, rise up on the social tribune and smother the miserable writers by their weight?

But how much greater must be the genius of the officials who select keepers of the peace in the sphere of thought and themselves keep check on them. "The higher we rise in this *bureaucracy of intelligence*, the more remarkable are the minds we encounter."²

In fact, in a bureaucratic, police state all censorship has a higher censorship above it, and the arbitrariness of each official is limited by the arbitrariness of the official above him. It is inevitable, however, that in such an arrangement "lawlessness now begins in the

¹ Karl Marx, "Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 126.

² Ibid.

third or ninety-ninth stage".¹ The bureaucratic state tries to place this sphere so high that it escapes the eye.

This analysis leads Marx to the natural conclusion that the "*radical cure for the censorship* would be its *abolition*; for the institution itself is a bad one...".²

Marx does not here preach the need to destroy the whole "bureaucratic" machine of the bourgeois state, but he comes close to this idea.

Marx in his mature years thought fairly highly of the article on the censorship instruction, as can be seen from the fact that he made it the opening article in the collection of his writings which began to come out in 1851 (because of governmental pressure this edition was stopped after the publication of the first volume).

The article contained such explosive force that there could be no question of it being printed in Germany, of course. As Marx had foreseen, the censorship wasted no time in confirming the accuracy of the description of itself given in the article, by placing a ban upon it. The article was published for the first time in 1843, in Switzerland.

However, in spring 1842 Marx published in the *Rheinische Zeitung* the above-mentioned article on debates in the Rhine Province Assembly on freedom of the press, where he approached the problem from a different angle.

Marx's new approach lay in the fact that he pointed to a direct link between the various opinions of the deputies on freedom of the press and their social, class status. This was an important step forward. "Estate" interests clash so irreconcilably in the discussion of freedom of the press, that it becomes

¹ Karl Marx, "Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 131.

² Ibid.

perfectly clear that there is no freedom "in general", each estate is defending its "own" freedom.

Marx shows that even the estates of the bourgeoisie and peasantry have demonstrated the limitedness of their demands for freedom of the press. Bourgeois freedom of the press, even in the form in which it existed in France at that time, is not regarded by Marx as sufficiently free. Although the French press "is not subject to a spiritual censorship, ... it is subject to a material censorship, in the shape of high money sureties", it is "drawn into the sphere of large trade speculations".¹

Here one sees clearly the emergence of a new idea, that of the dependence of "spiritual censorship" on "material" censorship, on the trading and monetary relations of bourgeois society. We shall witness the development of this idea in each successive work by Marx.

Marx's very first piece of public writing shows that the bourgeois freedoms which were the ideal of the liberal German intelligentsia, were by no means an ideal for him. He began his political activity as a *revolutionary democrat* right from the start, criticising German reality in a far more profound and consistent way than was within the capabilities of the most radical bourgeois liberals.

Marx concludes his article on the debates on freedom of the press with a quotation from Herodotus to the effect that once having tasted freedom one must fight for it "not merely with spears, but also with axes".

Marx's brilliant debut in the *Rheinische Zeitung* caused a real sensation. The friends, who had long expected from Marx concrete proof of his excep-

¹ Karl Marx, "Debates on Freedom of the Press". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 167.

tional talent, were satisfied. A. Ruge wrote that never before had anything so profound and more well-argued been said about freedom of the press and in its defence.

In the editorial offices of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx's influence, which had been quite considerable even before, rose so high that he became practically one of its leaders, and shortly afterwards, was appointed editor-in-chief.

In October 1842 the newspaper published a new series of articles dealing with debates in the Rhine Province Assembly, this time on the law of thefts of wood.

These articles are especially noteworthy in Marx's creative biography. For the first time he was compelled to come down from the heavens of abstraction to "firm ground", that is, to occupy himself with material interests not provided for by Hegel's philosophical system.

From this time onwards Marx's thinking was impelled in a direction which soon led him to an analysis of the class and economic structure of society. Reading the article on the debates on the theft of wood, we can imagine the first "flashes of lightning" which herald the "dawn" of new ideas.

His study of the circumstances connected with what would appear to be a private and insignificant element of economic life—thefts of wood and violation of the laws on hunting and on the protection of the forest—revealed to the full the poverty and lack of rights of the poor masses.

Marx saw how shamelessly the basic human rights were flouted in the interests of the large landowners, how people were sacrificed without the slightest hesitation to "wooden idols", if these idols were private ownership.

It became quite clear to him that "private owner-

ship" was anti-humane, that it was opposed to the individual and justified all manner of crimes against the individual, that it reduced man to the level of an animal.

And whereas in the natural animal kingdom the worker bees kill the drones, in the human "animal kingdom", on the contrary, "the drones kill the worker bees, and precisely by labour".¹

Profoundly angered by the social injustice of property relations, Marx firmly defends the interests of the "poor, politically and socially propertyless many".²

He exposes the "practical" forest owners who with the help of "learned and would-be learned servility" turn every sordid claim into "the pure gold of right", while the Assembly, obedient to the forest owners, has recourse to all manner of dishonest tricks in order to curtail the rights of the working people even further.

The Assembly repudiates the difference between gathering fallen wood, infringement of forest regulations, and theft of wood, when it is a question of the interests of the infringers of forest regulations. But it "recognises this difference when it is a question of the *interests of the forest owners*".³

Private interest is practical, selfish and cowardly. It is cowardly because it is based on lawlessness and trembles at the danger of losing all it has. Acting in the role of legislator, private interest knows only fear of the evil-doers against whom it issues laws. "Cruelty is a characteristic feature of laws dictated by cow-

¹ Karl Marx, "Debates on the Law on Thefts of Wood". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 231.

² *Ibid.*, p. 230.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 228.

ardice, for cowardice can be energetic only by being cruel.”¹

In revealing the pathetic role of the Rhine Province Assembly as the instrument of the forest owners, Marx was compelled to look upon the role of the state in society also with different eyes. His remaining illusions connected with the Hegelian fetishism of the state as the expression of the tribal essence of man disappeared.

“Nothing is more terrible than the logic of selfishness,” Marx exclaims. It, this logic, turns the authority of the state into a servant of the forest owner. “All the organs of the state become ears, eyes, arms, legs, by means of which the interest of the forest owner hears, observes, appraises, protects, reaches out, and runs.”²

The “sophistries” of selfishness are such that they invest the thing with a “remarkable property”. The wood stolen from the forest owner immediately makes him the personification of the state, for he acquires a state right over the thief. Thus it emerges that “the forest owner has made use of the wood thief to purloin the *state itself*”.³ In losing the right to dispose of a piece of wood, the forest owner obtains the right to dispose of a human being, just as Shylock in Shakespeare receives a bill of exchange for a pound of human flesh.

As we can see, Marx is again returning to the idea of the world turned upside down, an idea which is later to be developed in the categories of alienation of labour and commodity fetishism. Whereas the young Marx concludes his article on the theft of wood with the statement that wood is the “Rhinelanders’

¹ Karl Marx, “Debates on the Law on Theft of Wood”, Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 236.

² *Ibid.*, p. 245.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 253.

fetish", in *Capital* he shows how the "wooden brain" of the commodity rules the whole world of capitalist relations.

Marx admitted that his work on the article on the theft of wood gave him little pleasure, that he followed with disgust the boring and petty debates of the deputies. Yet this work directed his interests into a new channel. He came face to face with the position of the people, poverty-stricken and deprived of rights, about which the newspaper's correspondents wrote. He heard the "ruthless voice of want" not from books, not third-hand, but directly from the Mosel peasants themselves. And he regarded it as his "*political duty*" to speak on the pages of the newspaper "in the popular language of distress which in his native land he had no chance of forgetting", and to transmit "*with the utmost conscientiousness* the voice of the people as he has heard it".¹

Bourgeois Marxologists (when they can find no other "argument" against Marxism) are fond of writing about Marx's "dry rationalism", about the fact that for him, as they like to think, the individual was merely an abstract concept, a kind of "economic man", and that he was little moved by the real sufferings of the masses.

Such assertions can be made only by those who know of Marx from hearsay alone. It is enough to read his "Justification of the Correspondent from the Mosel" (end of 1842), "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844" or the first volume of *Capital* in order to feel not only the force of his "rational arguments" in defence of the oppressed, but also the force of his own emotions, the pain and anger

¹ Karl Marx, "Justification of the Correspondent from the Mosel". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 332, 333.

aroused by each concrete case of the degradation of man, the flouting of human rights and dignity.

Through the mechanical pulsation of the relations of private ownership, Marx, to use his own words, heard the "beat of the human heart".¹ Just as clearly do we feel in Marx's works the beat of his own heart, a heart which bled with compassion and contracted with anger and hatred.

It is no exaggeration to say that if Marx's head accumulated all the spiritual wealth of human culture, his heart bled for all the suffering of mankind. Heinrich Marx's fears were groundless: his son's heart matched his head perfectly.

Incidentally, in the "Justification of the Correspondent from the Mosel" where Marx speaks in the "language of distress", he is evidently referring to his father's work as a barrister and actions in defence of justice when he quotes examples of the bureaucratic arbitrary behaviour of the authorities in his native Trier. (More detail about these examples is given in the chapter "The Search for a Vocation".)

Marxism could not have developed into a scientific view of the world if at its very source it had not been nourished by the invigorating sap of life itself. But simple, empirical generalisation of the facts of "life itself" was not enough. Marx's fortunate feature was that he possessed the ability to throw light on "empirical reality" from the supreme heights of theoretical thought and, quite the reverse, to make the concrete analysis of concrete reality a basis for progressing to new heights of generalisation, for the search for a corresponding theory.

¹ Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 102.

His emotional impressions from the poor organisation of the world and the sufferings of various individuals encouraged him to search for an explanation of this poor organisation, to reveal its contradictions, "to see the effect of circumstances where at first glance only individuals seem to be acting".¹

Marx's words about a democratic press which should adopt an attitude to the people's conditions of life "based on *reason*, but ... equally based on *feeling*", and which in observing existing relations "does not speak only in the clever language of judgment but the passionate language of circumstances themselves"² apply to Marx himself.

The very logic of things prompted Marx, after his newspaper articles against bureaucratic arbitrariness and sham liberal gestures of the monarchy, to give a theoretical explanation of the social place and role of the monarchy and bureaucracy. This encouraged him to settle his score with the Hegelian theory of the state, with Hegel's loyalty to the monarchy and his ideal of constitutional despotism.

The large manuscript of the "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law" was finished in the summer of 1843. But in all probability Marx began work on it in the second half of 1841, that is, after his graduation from university. In it we find the same criticism of the "hybrid" of constitutional monarchy about which Marx wrote to Ruge in March 1842. Marx evidently continued to work on the article on Hegel's philosophy of law while he was contributing to the *Rheinische Zeitung*. Many of the ideas and thoughts expressed in the article coincide almost word for word with the ideas of his publicistic

¹ Karl Marx, "Justification of the Correspondent from the Mosel". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 337.

² *Ibid.*, p. 349.

works of that period.

Whereas on the pages of the newspaper Marx subjected concrete, individual aspects of the Prussian state machine in action to devastating criticism, in his manuscript on Hegel's philosophy of law he criticises the actual *principle* of the monarchic and bureaucratic state. He does not strike at the individual tentacles of Prussian despotism, but directs his blow at its very centre, the institution of private ownership, which is supported and sanctified by the caste of officialdom.

Reading this work on Hegel's philosophy of law is a hard task for the reader unfamiliar with the language of Hegelian philosophy. However, it contains a wealth of extremely profound and interesting ideas which retain their significance even in the present day.

Let us consider merely the key points of Marx's criticism.

At its centre lies criticism of the monarchy and the monarch. Hegel's monarch is the embodiment of the state. Hegel seeks to present him as a true "God-man", the genuine embodiment of the idea of the state which, according to Hegel, exists in order to represent the interest of all citizens of the state, to realise the "general interest".

Here Hegel contradicts himself in an absurd fashion. If one man personifies the whole state, does this not mean that all the other citizens are deprived of personal responsibility? When the sovereignty of power is concentrated in one person, all other persons are deprived of sovereignty. When one person is elevated to the rank of "God-man", this means that the whole of society is in a non-human, pre-human, animal state, just as in religion the sovereignty of God turns man into "God's slave".

"Sovereignty of the monarch or sovereignty of the

people—that is the question.”¹

The absurdity of Hegel's conception shows itself in the fact that, in wishing to follow the idealist principle consistently, he lapses into the most crude “materialism”.

The monarch realises the *idea* of the state in his person. But why is he the fortunate chosen one of this idea? On the basis of heredity, on the basis of the body, the activity of reproduction of the species is the highest function of the body. “The highest constitutional act of the king is therefore his sexual activity, for through this he *makes* a king and perpetuates his body. The body of his son is the reproduction of his own body, the creation of a royal body”.²

Thus “in its supreme functions the state acquires the reality of an *animal*”. And thus “nature avenges itself on Hegel for the contempt he has shown it”.³

Absolute rule, as Marx shows, rests on a bureaucratic hierarchy. The head of the state is merely the apex of the pyramid of bureaucracy. Hegel did not reveal the nature of this phenomenon, and could not do so because of his political attitudes. Marx makes good this omission, penetrating into the holy of holies of the authoritarian state.

Bureaucracy is “state consciousness”, “state will”, “state power”. It acts outwardly as the representative and guardian of “general interest”, although this is an imaginary generality, behind which lies the interest of a definite privileged group, or, as Marx says, following Hegel, the “spirit of the corporations”.

Bureaucrats are the priests of the state, its Jesuits,

¹ Karl Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law”. Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 28.

² *Ibid.*, p. 40.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 105.

its theologians. With them everything acquires a dual meaning: the real and the secret which is hidden from the eyes of the uninitiated. Therefore "the general spirit of the bureaucracy is the *secret*, the mystery".¹

The observance of this mystery is ensured by the isolation of the bureaucracy from the outside world in a secluded and "corporative spirit", but in its own environment the observance of this mystery is ensured by its hierarchic organisation. The violation of the "corporative" secret, the "avowed political spirit" appear to the bureaucracy as treason. "Its hierarchy is a *hierarchy of knowledge*. The top entrusts the understanding of detail to the lower levels, whilst the lower levels credit the top with understanding of the general, and so all are mutually deceived."²

However, the "knowledge" of the bureaucracy does not rest on scientific knowledge: the bureaucracy regard real science as empty. The bureaucracy's "knowledge" rests on faith in authority, blind submission, and the mechanism of firmly established, formal actions, ready-made principles, views and traditions.

"Hence, *authority* is the basis of its knowledge, and the deification of authority is its *conviction*."³

Thus, the despotic state exists in the form of a system of definite bureaucratic forces connected to one another by subordination and blind submission.

This analysis of the state by Marx inevitably leads one to the conclusion that the overthrow of the monarch alone is not enough to "humanise" the political life of the country. For this it is necessary to destroy

¹ Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 47.

² Ibid., pp. 46-47.

³ Ibid., p. 47.

the whole bureaucratic pyramid, which, in its turn, rests on the institution of private ownership, social and economic inequality. It is perfectly clear that his criticism of the state embraces not only the despotism of the monarchy, but also bourgeois democracy.

Marx describes the bureaucratic police state as something which is alien to the vital activity of the people, something divorced from "civil society", and standing above it, whereas the initial principle of the state system should be the people itself, man.

In his letter to A. Ruge written during the same period as the "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law", Marx proclaims the "transition to the human world of democracy". He sees clearly that "the system of industry and trade, of ownership and exploitation of the people" leads to a profound rupture within society which "the old system is not able to heal".¹

But whereas Marx saw the rottenness of the existing order which needed to be destroyed, and whereas the question "from where to proceed" did not exist for him he could not yet give a clear answer to the question of "where to go?" It was difficult to find this answer in semi-feudal Germany.

His search for a true battle slogan could be rewarded only by the elaboration of a scientific, materialist view of the whole social history of mankind.

¹ Karl Marx, "Letters from the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 141.

VII

In Search of a True Battle Slogan

... We do not confront the world in a doctrinaire way with a new principle: Here is the truth, kneel down before it! We develop new principles for the world out of the world's own principles.

KARL MARX¹

By what paths did Marx proceed to the elaboration of the materialist view of history?

Already at the very beginning of 1842 Marx in one of his articles proclaimed Ludwig Feuerbach, the inspired herald of atheism, materialism and humanism to be "the purgatory of our time", the "brook of fire" on the path to freedom and truth.²

He issued an appeal to "speculative theologians and philosophers" that is, to theologians and idealists: "free yourselves from the concepts and prejudices of former speculative philosophy, if you wish to arrive at things as they exist in reality."³

Marx read Ludwig Feuerbach's book *The Essence of Christianity* in the summer of 1841. There is a fine description by Engels of the influence which it had

¹ Karl Marx, "Letters from the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 144.

² Marx is playing on the literal meaning of "Feuerbach": "feuer" means "fire" and "bach" means "brook".

³ Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 1, Berlin, 1969, S. 27.

on the Young Hegelians at that time.

"With a single blow" this book dispersed all the contradictions in which the Young Hegelians were enmeshed, and announced the victory of materialism in plain terms. "Nature exists independently of all philosophy. It is the foundation upon which we human beings, ourselves products of nature, have grown up. Nothing exists outside nature and man, and the higher beings our religious fantasies have created are only the fantastic reflection of our own essence. The spell was broken; the 'system' was exploded and cast aside, and the contradiction, shown to exist only in our imagination, was dissolved. One must oneself have experienced the liberating effect of this book to get an idea of it. Enthusiasm was general; we all became at once Feuerbachians."¹

This expressive statement by Engels should not be applied in an oversimplified way to Marx's spiritual development, so as to suggest that Marx had only to read Feuerbach for the former idealist and Young Hegelian to do a volte-face and become a materialist overnight.

For a man of such profound and independent thought as Marx was even in his younger years, a change in his fundamental theoretical convictions could not be a question of the moment or of purely external influence.

He was not one of those people who are ready to take new principles on trust straightaway, even if they are expounded in a convincing and inspired fashion. Like any true theoretical scientist, he did not borrow "other people's" convictions, but used them as a basis on which to create his own. Before accept-

¹ Frederick Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy". Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 344.

ing a new theoretical idea, he had to put it through the test of probing critical thought which was merciless to itself. Moreover, the new principles were not simply "added" to the old, but required a reassessment of the whole accumulated spiritual wealth. They had to find their own place in the whole system of philosophy. Both the system and the principles had to be reorganised, in order that their "compatibility" was complete.

Such an approach was characteristic of Marx in respect of every shade of thought, even the most insignificant, so this should be borne in mind all the more in an assessment of the most important turning point in his philosophical convictions.

Marx's path to materialism was not a simple one. Feuerbach was not the only one to play a decisive role in this respect. Marx was led to materialism by a long and complex spiritual evolution, by the critical assimilation of the achievements of all preceding philosophical culture, a war with the religious world outlook, a constant struggle with Hegel's majestic system, at first with the aim of modernising it, and later with the aim of overcoming it.

Dissatisfaction with the "speculative nature" of Hegelian philosophy, the search for a closer union of philosophy with the "world", the search for an uncontradictory theoretic basis for atheistic convictions—all this led Marx to turn his attention to materialism already in his doctoral dissertation. However, the sympathy shown here for Greek materialism is not yet theoretically realised.

The Essence of Christianity and other works by Feuerbach, undoubtedly served as a powerful additional stimulus to Marx's thinking in the direction in which it was already proceeding.

But perhaps the greatest impetus in this direction was provided by Marx's intense publicistic activity in



Ludwig Feuerbach

the *Rheinische Zeitung*, the position adopted by him of an ardent tribune of the oppressed sections of the public, his desire to understand the complex clash and interaction of political and social forces, class aspirations, and material interests.

Feuerbach's materialism was of as little assistance in this as Hegel's philosophy of law. Feuerbach remained an idealist in the very sphere in which Marx wished to investigate above all, the sphere of social relations. Here Feuerbach was inferior even to Hegel.

It is interesting to trace how Marx's probing thought fingers the grains of truth, groping its way to an explanation of social relations.

At the beginning of 1842 Marx writes that it is essential to speak "with the accent of the matter", to react "to *each thing* according to *the latter's essential nature*",¹ that the truth lies in understanding things "as they actually are".²

The materialist tendency of these statements is beyond all question but materialism here appears in a most abstract form and does not touch upon social questions.

In the autumn of 1842, working on the article on the theft of wood, Marx was confronted with the need to gain a deeper understanding of the relation between ownership and the law. Since private ownership bestows the right to mastery over the individual, to juridical and state-administrative sanctions against the propertyless, is it the factor which determines political and juridical institutions? This would seem to be the obvious conclusion, but Marx himself does not formulate it yet.

¹ Karl Marx, "Comments on the Latest Prussian Censorship Instruction". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 113.

² Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 1, S. 27.

At the beginning of 1843 Marx approaches more definitely a true interpretation of the mechanism of social relations. In defending the Mosel vine-growers, he shows that social injustice is caused not by the actions of individual personalities in themselves, that these personalities embody "all the harshness of the contemporary conditions" and that these conditions are "*general, invisible and compelling forces*".¹

These conditions are as independent of the will of the individual personalities as the "method of breathing". One must not look for good or evil will on the side of the officials and on the side of the poor, but "see the effect of circumstances".²

Marx is arriving at the idea that such an approach enables us to understand intricate social collisions with approximately the same degree of certainty with which the chemist "determines" the "collisions" of chemical compounds. "Once it is proved that a phenomenon is made *necessary* by circumstances, it will no longer be difficult to ascertain the *external* circumstances in which it must *actually* be produced and those in which it could not be produced, although the need for it already existed."³

Whereas not so long ago Marx had seen the absence of freedom of the press as a stumbling-block to the solution of social problems, now in keeping with his newly-acquired materialist approach he is postulating that the *necessity* for a free press follows from the *specific character* of the state of distress in the Mosel region.⁴

¹ Karl Marx, "Justification of the Correspondent from the Mosel". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 354.

² *Ibid.*, p. 337.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

From this materialist position Marx criticises Hegel's "pantheistic mysticism" where "thought does not conform to the nature of the state; but the state to a ready-made system of thought".¹ Marx postulates that the content of the state in its various forms should be explained not from it itself, not from the "idea of the state", but from the sphere of material relations—the family and "civil society".

It would seem that the sought-for key to an explanation of social relations has now been found and a great step forward made by comparison with both Hegel and Feuerbach. In the chaos of social forces, subjective aspirations, the struggle of individual passions and ideas, the contours of objective logic have begun to emerge before Marx's vision.

But for the time being they are only contours, the outlines of which are blurred, vague and indefinite. It is not enough to tell the people that the cause of its impoverished state lies in objective relations, one must also reveal their nature, show the way to freedom, provide a "true battle slogan". What is this slogan? Where is the strength on which the "oppressed estate" can rely?

Marx's mind continues to wrestle with the task of explaining social problems, but comes up against a "ceiling": he is confronted with gaps of knowledge in the sphere of political economy, history and the theory of social relations, in the sphere of the doctrines of the utopian socialists and the representatives of utopian communism.

Marxism is a complete and consistent teaching. It was formed as an organic system in which no part arises before the whole, but develops and perfects itself together with the whole just as a living foetus.

¹ Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law". Marx, Engels. *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 19.

It would be naive to think that dialectical materialism emerged first, then scientific communism and political economy, although Marx's interests at different periods of his life were concentrated primarily on one or other of these spheres. Although Marx began to elaborate his new world outlook with philosophy, the decisive revolution in this sphere became possible only in the process of the formation of the social and economic aspects of Marxism.

This factor emerged already in the period of the *Rheinische Zeitung*. Broad and encyclopaedic as Marx's philosophical knowledge was, this spiritual wealth was obviously insufficient to solve the questions posed by real life, and even to achieve true progress in philosophy itself. Marx was compelled to embark upon a profound study of social relations both in real life and in theory. He made a critical analysis of the theoretical constructions of the utopian socialists, first and foremost, Saint-Simon, Fourier and Owen, who described with great perspicacity many of the features of communist society (absence of private ownership, class antagonisms and the exploitation of man by man, the turning of labour from a curse into a prime human requirement, self-government, etc.), but naively assumed that one could turn a capitalist society into a communist one not by revolution, but by "force of example", by homilies, by the conversion to their faith of bankers and factory owners who would voluntarily surrender their property and hand it over to the poor for collective use.

Marx obviously felt a certain mistrust of the utopian socialists even in his student days, being unable to sense any real link between their fine flights of fantasy and the life of semi-feudal Prussia. If one bears in mind also that in Germany the ideas of utopian socialism were often preached in a confused and even mystical form, his mistrust was natural.



Robert Owen



Charles Fourier



Claude Henri Saint-Simon

The urgent practical tasks, to the solution of which Marx devoted himself entirely in the *Rheinische Zeitung*, made his guarded attitude to utopianism even more definite. He believed that "the correct theory must be made clear and developed within the concrete conditions and on the basis of the existing state of things". He was disgusted by the position of his former friends, the Young Hegelians, who, from a "comfortable armchair of abstractions", indulged in general arguments, instead of "winning freedom step by step, within the constitutional framework".¹

Of course, hopes for winning freedom in such a way were illusory, a fact which Marx did not yet realise. He was hoping to unite all "free-thinking practical people" around the newspaper and feared that a "clear demonstration against the foundations of the present state system can result in an intensification of the censorship and even the suppression of the newspaper".²

The matter took such a turn, however, that Marx was compelled in the autumn of 1842 to express himself publicly on the ideas of utopian communism.

About this time the *Rheinische Zeitung* published a series of articles by Mevissen and Hess in which the authors expressed socialist ideas and even advanced the demand for a "property revolution". Moses Hess, in particular, compared the struggle of the proletariat against private ownership to the struggle of the bourgeoisie against feudalism and announced that this struggle threatened to lead to national revolution.

The Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung*, a competitor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, seized this opportunity to attack its rival. It poked fun at the "rich merchant

¹ Karl Marx, "To Dagobert Oppenheim. Approximately August 25, 1842". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 392.

² Ibid.

sons" (Moses Hess was from a merchant family) who in their simple-hearted way play with socialist ideas without the slightest intention of sharing their property with the Cologne artisans and dockers; at the same time the *Allgemeine Zeitung* argued that in such a backward country as Germany one would need to have a really infantile idea of things to threaten the middle class, which had just begun to breathe freely, with the fate of the French nobility in 1789.

This was a shrewd blow aimed at frightening bourgeois readers away from the *Rheinische Zeitung* and making the newspaper appear communist to the government.

As editor-in-chief of the *Rheinische Zeitung* Marx was bound to counter the attack. He was confronted with a complex and subtle diplomatic task: to defend the position already adopted by the newspaper and at the same time reassure the subscribers who were shocked by "communism".

Marx remarks scathingly that communism should not be a drawing-room subject for elegant phrases. It does not smell of rose water and wears dirty linen, but this does not prevent it from being an important question of the time.

Marx firmly defends the idea of the new estate, that is, the proletariat: "That the estate that today owns nothing *demands* to share in the wealth of the middle classes is a fact which, without the talk at Strasbourg, and in spite of Augsburg's silence, is obvious to everyone in Manchester, Paris and Lyons."¹

This first mention of the proletariat in Marx's works shows that by 1842 he was already paying

¹ Karl Marx, "Communism and the Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung*". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 216.

attention to its social demands—in France and England.

However, in what way the “collision” between the middle class (the bourgeoisie) and the new estate (the workers) will be settled, Marx does not take it upon himself to judge as yet. “We have not mastered the art of disposing by a *single* phrase of problems which two nations are working to solve.”¹

Marx makes a clear distinction between two aspects of the question: the real problem of the communist movement, as a movement of the “new estate”, and theoretical illumination, the propaganda of communism. With regard to this second aspect Marx is critical. But here too he is extremely cautious in the way he expresses himself. In announcing that the *Rheinische Zeitung* will subject communist ideas to thoroughgoing criticism, that it does not admit that they possess even theoretical reality, and therefore can still less desire their practical implementation, Marx has in mind communist ideas “in their present form”.

Precisely what it was in utopian communism which did not appeal to Marx can be seen from his sarcastic remarks about a certain obscure acquaintance of the *Allgemeine Zeitung* who gave all he possessed to the commune and “washed plates and cleaned boots for his comrades”. The reference here is obviously to the phalange communes of Fourier’s followers which were the object of many anecdotes and merely discredited communist ideas. Marx was right in saying that such “attempts” are not really dangerous.

The essence of his remarks, somewhat veiled because of the censorship, was that it was essential to search for a theoretical basis for communist ideas which would conquer people’s intellect, take posses-

¹ Karl Marx, “Communism and the Augsburg *Allgemeine Zeitung*”. Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1. p. 219.

sion of their minds, and would then be able to resist even the cannon. Marx admits that before making a theoretical criticism of communism he intends to study thoroughly the works of Leroux, Considérant, and above all "the sharp-witted work by Proudhon".

Later he recalled: "At that time when good intentions 'to push forward' often took the place of factual knowledge, an echo of French socialism and communism, slightly tinged by philosophy, was noticeable in the *Rheinische Zeitung*. I objected to this dilettantism, but at the same time frankly admitted in a controversy with the *Allgemeine Augsburger Zeitung* that my previous studies did not allow me to express any opinion on the content of the French theories."¹

The running of the *Rheinische Zeitung* required of Marx, who was not yet twenty-five at the time, not only more extensive and profound knowledge, but also qualities of sober, practical leadership which, it seemed, were not characteristic of his personality with its irrepressible spirit of the fighter.

Marx showed, however, that he had fully mastered the complex art of directing the newspaper with a firm hand along the only possible channel, manoeuvring skilfully between the Scylla of the censorship and the Charybdis of ultra-revolutionary demands.

These demands were made by the Berlin Young Hegelians who joined together in the circle of "The Free". They sent to the newspaper "heaps of scribbles, pregnant with revolutionising the world and empty of ideas", all of which they seasoned with poorly-digested utopian communism.

Marx showed strength of character, firmly rejecting this "torrent of words". Nor was he disturbed by the

¹ Karl Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Moscow, 1970, p. 20.

despairing cries of "The Free" about the "conservatism" and "treachery" of the new editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*.

For Marx, as a revolutionary democrat, it was important to make the newspaper the centre of all the forces of opposition in the country. "The Free", however, were demanding that the newspaper act in a most "extreme" fashion which would have led to its immediate closure. As a result the "field of battle" would be left in the hands of the police and the censorship.

One must know what "The Free" stood for in order to understand Marx's harsh attitude towards the circle, whose members included people with whom he had been quite friendly in the past: Bruno Bauer, Adolf Rutenberg, and Friedrich Köppen.

The circle was composed of a mixed bunch: there were liberal journalists competing in their wit, young poets dreaming vague dreams of a new political dawn, budding artists, privat-docents who had not yet had time to drape themselves in the toga of academic wisdom, officers who were not totally engrossed in the interests of the barracks and the stables, and students who were bored stiff by the dreary lectures of their professors. Among "The Free" there were also ladies with the reputation of being good sorts, who did not turn up their noses at a familiar joke or bad language.¹

This company would assemble in a tavern where they consumed a great deal of liquor and just as merrily destroyed the whole existing order while they were about it. By noisily displaying their contempt for philistinism, making themselves out to be individuals free from all the "prejudices" of society, and

¹ M. V. Serebryakov, *The Poet Herwegh and Marx*, Russ. ed., Leningrad, 1948, p. 28.

pelting one another with "terribly revolutionary" phrases, these Bohemian writers themselves merely gave a demonstration of philistines gone wild.

Their clowning frequently turned into debauchery. They organised scandalous escapades, arranged beggars' processions, extorted money from passers-by to continue their drinking bouts, went off to brothels and played the fool there until they were thrown out.

During the wedding of Max Stirner, Bruno Bauer who, together with his brother Edgar, was the leader of "The Free's" escapades, handed the priest his wallet's rings instead of real wedding rings.

It was with these extravagancies which made the philistines tremble, that Bruno Bauer accompanied his equally extravagant theoretical statements to the effect that the state, property and the family should be regarded as abolished concepts.

In "freeing" themselves from the "conventions" of society, proclaiming the cult of the proud individual who stands above the "crowd", "The Free" did not notice that at the same time they were freeing themselves from the human condition and wallowing up to their ears in filth. They protested against the "swinishness" of society with their individual swinishness.

For all his dislike of moralising, philistine hypocrisy, Marx could not sympathise with such forms of protest against it. He was particularly indignant that the "Berlin windbags" with incredible vanity and bragging advertised themselves as true revolutionaries, communists and liberators of mankind, thus discrediting the great cause.

He confronted these "heroes of freedom" who wished to turn the *Rheinische Zeitung* into an organ of shameless self-advertisement, with an inexorable and fair demand: less vague reasoning, magniloquent phrases and complacent self-adoration, and more definiteness, more attention to the actual state of

affairs, more expert knowledge.

Marx stated that he regarded as inappropriate, even immoral the device of "The Free" to smuggle communist and socialist doctrines, hence a new world outlook, into incidental theatrical criticisms, etc. He demanded "a quite different and more thorough discussion of communism, if it should be discussed at all".¹

The break with "The Free" had become a fact, but this did not save the *Rheinische Zeitung* from the chastising hand of the government which was angered by the critical articles and, in particular, by Marx's article in defence of the Mosel vine-growers. The clouds were gathering above the newspaper.

Regardless of the most horrible torments of the censorship, howls from shareholders, accusations in the Provincial Assembly, and complaints of the Oberpräsident, Marx remained at his post, considering it his duty to prevent, to the best of his ability, those in power from carrying out their plans.

Marx was prepared to make certain compromises, if they allowed the newspaper to retain its character and dignity and continue its previous line, but when the newspaper-owners began to insist that it should preach a "moderate" attitude to the authorities, Marx protested and was compelled to leave the editorial board. For tactical reasons he was prepared to give way on details for the sake of saving the main thing, but he never gave way on matters of principle.

Even the arch-enemy of the newspaper, its censor Saint-Paul, who harassed the editorial board in the most shameless fashion, could not deny the nobility, strength of character and profound convictions of the editor, Marx. In informing the government of the retire-

¹ "Karl Marx to Arnold Ruge, November 30, 1842". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 394.

ment from the newspaper of Dr. Marx, whose ultra-democratic views were not in keeping with the principles of the Prussian state, Saint-Paul noted that there was now not a single person in Cologne capable of running the newspaper with its former odious character and energetically fighting for its tendency.

Marx himself gave a sigh of relief when he left the newspaper: he admitted to Arnold Ruge that he had begun to be stifled in that atmosphere. "It is a bad thing to have to perform menial duties even for the sake of freedom; to fight with pinpricks, instead of with clubs. I have become tired of hypocrisy, stupidity, gross arbitrariness, and of our bowing and scraping, dodging, and hair-splitting over words. Consequently, the government has given me back my freedom."¹

Possibly it was this period of his life that Marx recalled in 1865 when, in a questionnaire compiled by his daughters, he replied to the question: "Your idea of misery" with the word "Submission".²

Leaving the newspaper meant for Marx losing the last opportunity of taking part in the political struggle in his country. And without this, it was quite pointless for him to remain any longer in philistine Germany that licked the boots with which the Kaiser was crushing emergent bourgeois liberalism.

For this reason Marx decided without hesitation and, perhaps, even gladly, to leave Germany where "one makes a counterfeit of oneself",³ because "the atmosphere here makes one a serf".⁴

¹"Karl Marx to Arnold Ruge, January 25, 1843". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 397.

²Reminiscences of Marx and Engels, p. 266.

³"Karl Marx to Arnold Ruge, March 13, 1843". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 398.

⁴Karl Marx, "Letters from the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 142.

There was also another most important reason for Marx's animated mood. He had firmly resolved to begin the new period of his life outside Germany together with Jenny, who had waited for him through all the years of university study and work on the *Rheinische Zeitung*.

Informing Arnold Ruge of his private plans in March 1843, Marx confessed to him: "I can assure you, without the slightest romanticism, that I am head over heels in love, and indeed in the most serious way. I have been engaged for more than seven years, and for my sake my fiancée has fought the most violent battles, which almost undermined her health, partly against her pietistic aristocratic relatives, for whom 'the Lord in heaven' and the 'lord in Berlin' are equally objects of religious cult, and partly against my own family, in which some priests and other enemies of mine have ensconced themselves."¹

On June 12, 1843 the marriage contract was signed "between Herr Carl Marx, Doctor of Philosophy, resident in Cologne, and Fräulein Johanna Bertha Julie Jenny von Westphalen, without occupation, resident in Kreuznach".²

From this day onwards Marx acquired a loyal companion for the rest of his life. Jenny, to quote Engels, "... not only shared the fate, work and struggle of her husband, but also took part in them herself with great intelligence and ardent passion".³

After living for a few months in Kreuznach, the

¹ "Karl Marx to Arnold Ruge, March 13, 1843". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 399.

² Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 571.

³ Karl Marx, "Letters from the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*". Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 19, Berlin, 1962, S. 291.

young couple left for Paris, where Marx and Ruge intended to publish the journal *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*.

"And so—to Paris, to the old university of philosophy—*absit omen!*"¹ (let this not be a bad omen! — *Ed.*).

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 142.

VIII

Communism as Completed Humanism

At the entrance to science, as
at the entrance to hell, the de-
mand must be made:
Qui si convien lasciare ogni sospetto
Ogni viltà convien che qui sia morta

KARL MARX¹

Paris in the 1840s was the political and cultural centre of Europe. Here thronged revolutionaries and political exiles from Poland, Italy, Russia and Germany. Unlike Germany everything here was redolent of revolution—both the great events of the recent past and the expectation of new social battles.

About the Paris of that time the young Engels wrote as follows: "And only France has a Paris, a city in which European civilisation has its finest flowering, in which all the nerve-fibres of European history unite and from which emanate at measured intervals those electric shocks which can shake a whole world; a city whose population combines a passion for pleasure with a passion for historical action like no other people, whose populace know how to live like the most refined Epicurean of Athens and to die like the most intrepid Spartan...."²

¹ Karl Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy", p. 23. In this statement Marx quotes lines from Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

² Frederick Engels, "From Paris to Berne". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, Moscow, 1977, p. 512.

Perhaps nowhere else was dissatisfaction with the bourgeois order which put money-seeking in place of the high ideals of freedom, equality and fraternity felt so keenly as in Paris.

It is no accident that it was here that social thinking strove to anticipate theoretically the society which was coming to replace capitalism. After Saint-Simon and Fourier with their utopias came Cabet, D  zamy, Blanqui, Proudhon and Leroux who enjoyed great popularity both among the progressive intelligentsia and in workers' circles and unions. The proletariat of France had already taken shape as a powerful social force capable of withstanding the bourgeoisie.

From Paris vistas of historical development were opening up which were incomparably broader and more far-reaching than in Germany. It is natural, therefore, that it was in Paris that Marx became a Marxist, so to speak, and the decisive ideas of scientific communism were found and formulated here.

In order to create a revolutionary theory, to find a true battle slogan, it was necessary to generalise the experience of the class struggles of the past. Marx had begun to study this experience in Germany, in Kreuznach, but in France he found incomparably better conditions to fulfil this task. He studied the works of the bourgeois historians—Thierry, Mignet, Guizot, Thiers and others who, as Marx later admitted, discovered the existence of classes and the class struggle in contemporary society. He also studied the social theories of Montesquieu, Machiavelli and Rousseau.

If all history is the history of the struggle of classes, the following questions logically arise. Which class in contemporary conditions is the bearer of revolutionary energy? To which class does the future belong? What sort of future will it be?

Marx turned again to a critical study of French



David Ricardo



Adam Smith

utopian socialism and communism which originated directly from French materialism. Saint-Simon and Fourier had already made a fundamental criticism of bourgeois society as one not in keeping with the principles of humanism. They too had drawn attention to the proletariat, but they saw it as an oppressed and suffering estate worthy only of pity and charity from those in power and authority.

Just as for Hegel the whole world was the expression of the Absolute Spirit, so for the utopians socialism was the expression of the absolute truth of human relations. Just as in Hegel his false point of departure led to the creation of a dogmatic system in which the Absolute Spirit realises itself, so for the utopians, even the most eminent among them (particularly Fourier), the whole matter was reduced to the constructing of ideal schemes of the development of society, which need only be realised in order to solve all contradictions.

The overcoming of Hegel and the overcoming of utopian socialism were by no means two parallel tasks: they were a single task, the solution of which, in its turn, lay in the search for the governing factor in the development of human society.

The constructing of "ready-made schemes", "dogmatic abstractions", to which reality had to adapt itself, never appealed to Marx in either Hegel's teaching or utopian socialism. Neither of these great achievements of human thought were fit to become an instrument for changing the world. Both doctrines, however, contained within themselves their own negation. In Hegel's case this negation was the dialectical method of thinking, in the case of the utopian socialists it was their criticism of bourgeois property relations as relations which cripple man and do not correspond to his essence.

In order to clarify the nature of these relations not

only from the juridical, but also from the economic point of view, Marx made a profound study of bourgeois political economy: he analysed the works of Adam Smith, Ricardo, McCulloch, James Mill, Jean-Baptiste Say, Skarbek, Destutt de Tracy and Boisguillebert. An additional impetus for Marx to his study of political economy appears to have been an article by the young Frederick Engels published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* and entitled "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy", which Marx referred to as brilliant.

In Paris Marx acquired the opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with the outstanding figures of the political opposition, with the revolutionary democrats and socialists Louis Blanc, Pierre Leroux, Heinrich Heine, Pierre Joseph Proudhon, and Mikhail Bakunin.

True to his desire to combine theoretical criticism with the real struggle of the classes, Marx established connections with revolutionary circles of German artisans and French workers. Police reports wrote that Marx attended meetings of revolutionary workers by one of the Paris gates, near the castle of Vincennes.

The revolutionary workers were very fond of Marx, sensing in him the resolution and consistency of the real political fighter who knows what to fight for and how to do it. One of the leaders of a political society of German workers, Hermann Ewerbeck, wrote: "Karl Marx ... is, without a doubt, at least as significant a genius as G. E. Lessing. Gifted with an exceptional intelligence, an iron character and an imperturbable sagacity, and possessing extensive knowledge, Karl Marx has devoted himself to the study of economic, political, legal and social questions."¹

¹ Auguste Cornu, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels. Leben und Werk*, Bd. 2, S. 18.

Through first-hand acquaintance with the life of the workers Marx gained an ever increasing admiration of the moral energy, tireless striving for knowledge, and human dignity of the revolutionary workers. In a letter to Ludwig Feuerbach of August 11, 1844 he writes: "You would have to attend one of the meetings of the French workers to appreciate the pure freshness, the nobility which burst forth from these toil-worn men. The English proletarian is also advancing with giant strides but he lacks the cultural background of the French. But I must not forget to emphasise the theoretical merits of the German artisans in Switzerland, London and Paris. The German artisan is still however too much of an artisan.

"But in any case it is among these 'barbarians' of our civilised society that history is preparing the practical element for the emancipation of mankind."¹

Unlike the utopians, Marx sees the proletariat not as an object for sentimental effusions, but as a force capable of revolutionary action.

The proletariat is the connecting link between theory and practice, between philosophy and the world. Marx formulated this discovery in his article "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction", which can be called a true masterpiece of scientific publicistics both in content and in form. This article, and the article "On the Jewish Question" which is closely related to it in thought, was published at the beginning of 1844 in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*.

Truly human liberation, Marx states in these articles, is impossible without "breaking *every* kind of bondage", and the proletariat is the class which is in the most deprived and oppressed state. The prole-

¹ Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 355.

tariat cannot emancipate itself without liberating all spheres of society.

"The *head* of this emancipation is *philosophy*, its *heart* is the *proletariat*".¹

In these articles Marx takes an important step forward—he finds both a true battle slogan and the "material" force which is capable of turning it into a reality, capable of realising the humane ideals of mankind. Lenin described this step of Marx's as his final transition from idealism to materialism and from revolutionary democracy to communism.²

At the age of twenty-six Marx had risen to the peaks of a new view of the world. This had become possible only after unparalleled theoretical thinking. The whole legacy of European culture in the sphere of philosophy and social thought was assimilated and critically reshaped by him. Marx did not pass over a single independent, albeit minor, philosopher, from Thales of Miletus to Ludwig Feuerbach and Moses Hess. He digested all the fundamental historical works—from Herodotus and Plutarch to Guizot and Thiers, he read the utopian socialists—from Plato to Leroux and Weitling. He studied the most important works on political economy—from Adam Smith to Frederick Engels. Finally, Marx embraced the diverse riches of artistic culture—from the poem of Lucretius to the verse of Heinrich Heine, from the tragedies of Aeschylus to the plays of Shakespeare, and from the dialogues of Plato to the prose of Balzac. Yet this knowledge on its own would appear to be insufficient for the elaboration of a new view of the world. All

¹ Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 187.

² V. I. Lenin, "Karl Marx", *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, p. 80.

ages have had their armchair scholastics, stuffed with knowledge about everything under the sun, but incapable of producing a single thought of their own. Marx not only mastered the great achievements of human genius, but made them the instrument and method of creative thought, with no fear of the truth for which he strove tirelessly.

And, most important, Marx consciously adopted the standpoint first of the oppressed peasant masses in Germany, and then of the proletariat, the most revolutionary and most effective of the revolutionary classes of all times.

Scientific socialism (or scientific communism, which is the same thing) arose not only as the generalisation and practical interpretation of the spiritual achievements of mankind, but also (this factor proved to be decisive in the last analysis) as the expression of certain economic and socio-political tendencies in bourgeois society itself.

It was with this fact in mind that Engels wrote: "Like every new theory, modern socialism had, at first, to connect itself with the intellectual stock-in-trade ready to its hand, however deeply its roots lay in material economic facts."¹

Marx's transition to firm support of the revolutionary proletarian movement led to a break with the bourgeois democrats, first and foremost, with Arnold Ruge.

For all his energetic radicalism Ruge was only a philistine who was not averse to dreaming about freedom but had no desire to pay for it from his own pocket. Ruge was hoping to obtain a considerable income from the sales of the *Deutsch-Französische*

¹ Frederick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific". Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 115.

Jahrbücher, and when these hopes were dashed he sank into depression, became as suspicious as a shop-keeper, and saw each publishing initiative of Marx's as an attempt to rob his wallet.

At the same time Ruge did not hesitate to make use of Marx's "sovereign indifference in money matters" (Mehring) and, in spite of the extreme indigence of Marx, whose family was growing (his daughter Jenny was born in May 1844), brazenly paid him a salary in the form of copies of the *Jahrbücher*.

The main point, however, was that Marx's communism produced the panic-stricken terror of the philistine in Ruge.

Freed from his editorial duties on the *Jahrbücher*, Marx devoted himself to his studies with increased fervour. The main thing seemed to have been achieved—the foundations of the new world outlook had been elaborated. But for Marx this was only the beginning. He was searching for a new point of view to reinterpret the whole past, present and future of mankind. He read a great deal, and one project followed another in his head. At first he wanted to return to his uncompleted manuscript on Hegel's philosophy of law and interpret it now from the communist point of view. Then he became totally absorbed in the history of the French Revolution and longed passionately to write a history of the Convention. Finally, he turned to a criticism of the utopian socialists and political economists.

His mind was working so intensely that it quickly overtook what he had just written. He was never content with what he had done: the more he learned, the more boundless seemed the ocean of that which he did not know. The more questions he solved for himself, the more new problems presented themselves to him.

The manuscripts remained uncompleted, his think-

ing advanced further, engendering new ideas. The demon of self-criticism did not allow Marx to let anything see the light of day unless he had studied the question thoroughly with all its fine points.

Arnold Ruge writes of this period in Marx's studies as follows: "He is reading a great deal: he works with an unusual intensity and has a critical talent which sometimes becomes wantonly degenerating dialectics, but he is not finishing anything, he keeps breaking off and plunging again into an endless sea of books."¹

This state of unusually intense scientific research and constant dissatisfaction with what had been achieved dispirited Marx, but he could do nothing about it. His only solution was to work even harder, spending several nights in a row without sleep. "Marx is, if possible, even more irritable and hot-tempered," remarked Ruge, "particularly when he works until he makes himself ill and does not go to bed for three, or even four nights."²

The most important result of all this study was the large unfinished work which is known under the title of *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.

This work still bears traces of the "birth pangs" in which Marxism was born, which can be seen, in particular, in the terminology borrowed from Hegel and Feuerbach. But through the withered shell of certain old philosophical concepts burst the shoots of a fundamentally new view of society, an approach to an interpretation of the world which the world had not known before.

Here for the first time the economic, philosophical and socio-political approaches to the analysis of society are synthesised on a large scale. Here man is

¹ Auguste Cornu, *Karl Marx und Friedrich Engels. Leben und Werk*, Bd. 2, S. 19.

² Ibid.

placed in the centre of the whole examination and appears in the whole complexity of his relations with both nature and society. Here the author gives a vivid sketch of the inhuman conditions of life in bourgeois society from the viewpoint of genuine and consistent humanism. Here the anger and passion of the political fighter are fused with the analytical maturity of the great thinker. Here a real approach to concrete reality is combined with a view of the remote horizons of social development. This work poses the most profound problems which will retain their significance over the centuries.

This explains the undiminishing interest shown by philosophers, economists, and sociologists of the present day in all countries in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.

The wealth of ideas in the *Manuscripts* is such that it cannot be reproduced in even the most detailed exposition or the most objective interpretation: one must read the work oneself (several times!) in order to enjoy to the full the boldness, breadth and artistic beauty of the theoretical thought which breaks down and shatters the barriers of one-sided ideas, the narrowness of doctrinaire schemes, which removes the last idealist fetters not only from the interpretation of nature, but also from the interpretation of social development.

In this work Marx proceeds from a view already reached by him, namely that the explanation of the whole history of mankind must be sought in material relations. He formulates it in the following way: "...The entire revolutionary movement necessarily finds both its empirical and its theoretical basis in the movement of *private property*—more precisely, in that of the economy."¹

¹ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 297.

Man's productive life, his labour—this is the main-spring of social progress. Man's labour assumes different forms in different social conditions. Finally, "there remain altogether only two classes of the population—the working class and the class of capitalists."¹

In the place of Feuerbach's abstract man Marx places the worker. In the place of Feuerbach's relations of one man to another, Marx places the relations of the worker and the capitalist, the relations of living labour and accumulated labour (capital).

In a world where everything is bought and sold, where the power of money is supreme and absolute, the worker himself is a commodity. He possesses neither capital nor rent. He possesses only the ability to labour, and labour produces all the wealth of society.

It is this real fact of bourgeois society which Marx makes the starting point of his analysis.

The worker produces material wealth. But it does not belong to him. What is more, this wealth is not only alienated from the worker, but also opposed to him as an alien force which rules over the worker, as capital. Marx calls this fact the alienation of labour.

The more a worker labours, the greater the world of wealth created by him becomes, but at the same time the rule of this wealth over the worker also increases. The capitalist becomes more powerful, the worker poorer and even more deprived of rights.

The worker becomes the slave of the article of labour created by him. His accumulated labour, which appears in the form of capital, monetary wealth, hires the worker, gives him the means of subsistence, and disposes of his living labour and his very life itself.

The labour of the worker produces marvellous

¹ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 266.

things, but it also produces the impoverishment of the worker. It creates palaces, but also slums for workers. It creates beauty, but disfigures the worker himself. It replaces manual labour by machines only in order to turn the workers themselves into mechanically functioning machines. The more intricate the work performed by him becomes, the greater his mental devastation.

This reverse world, where the thing rules over its creator, where relations between people appear in the form of relations between things, is later analysed in detail by Marx in *Capital* and preparatory works for it. The image born in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* acquires even more vivid and sinister outlines there.

But let us turn to the *Manuscripts* and follow Marx's argument. The alienation from the worker of the results of his labour is only one aspect of the matter. Another, equally important, one is that the very living process of the worker's activity is of an alienated nature, it is the self-alienation of his human essence.

What does this mean? It means that the worker labours not of his own free will, and that his activity is not *self-activity*, but forced and compulsory labour, in the process of which the worker belongs not to himself but to his employer.

In this coerced labour the worker does not develop his physical and mental energy freely, but wears himself out, mortifies his body and ruins his mind. By the logic of things he should be satisfying in labour a genuine human requirement: the requirement to create. But for him labour is a means for the satisfaction of the most elementary requirements.

The alienated character of labour is seen most clearly in the fact that people regard it as a curse,

perform it with revulsion, and run away from it like the plague.

In the process of labour—this most human requirement—the worker does not feel himself a human being. He is acting here merely as a coerced animal, as a live machine. On the contrary, it is outside labour, in the performance of his elementary, basically animal functions, eating, drinking, the sexual act, sleeping, etc., that the worker feels himself a freely acting human being. "What is animal becomes human and what is human becomes animal."¹

Thus the self-alienation of the worker takes place in the process of labour. And its direct consequence is the alienation of man from man, the opposing positions of the worker and the capitalist.

Usually Marx's treatment of the problem of the alienation and self-alienation of labour is appreciated only from the negative aspect, as a devastating criticism of economic reality. Yet in this criticism one can see clearly the positive principles behind Marx's appraisal of what exists, his idea of what human labour and human relations should be like, that is, his idea of communist society.

Marx believes that labour should be the *self-affirmation*, not the self-alienation, of the human individual. It should be not a means of subsisting, but the essence of life, a process in which man develops his abilities fully and thoroughly. The stimulus to labour should be not external compulsion, but a profound inner need for creativity.

In the *Ökonomische Studien (Exzerpte)*, a work which is very close to the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx describes this world of the alienated man simply as a caricature of man's real

¹ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 275.

social essence, his "true generic life".¹

The following extract from the *Exzerpte* shows how the young Marx pictured this real life in a world organised "humanely", that is, in communist society.

"Let us suppose that we have produced as people: each of us in his production has *doubly affirmed* himself and another. I have 1)... enjoyed an individual *manifestation of life* during the activity and individual joy in contemplation of the object.... 2) In your enjoyment or your use of my product I have had *direct* enjoyment also of the realisation that in my work ... I have created an object which corresponds to the need of another *human* being; 3) that I have been a *mediator* between you and the species, and that you have known and felt me as an extension of your own being and as an essential part of you yourself.... 4) that in my individual manifestation of life I have directly created your manifestation of life, and, consequently, in my individual activity I have directly *confirmed* and *realised* my true being, my *human*, my *social essence*.

"My work would be a *free manifestation of life*, hence, an *enjoyment of life*. In the presence of private ownership it is alienation of life, because I work *in order to live*, in order to obtain *the means* to live. My work is *not* life."²

Bourgeois political economy regards as wealth only the world of material values. For it the worker is merely a means of augmenting wealth. It exhorts the worker to suppress his requirements, to renounce the pleasures of life in favour of the saving and accumulation of money and things.

¹ Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Erste Abteilung, Bd. 3, S. 536.

² Marx/Engels, *Gesamtausgabe*, Erste Abteilung, Ibid., S. 546-47.

The less you eat, drink and buy books, the less you go to the theatre, balls, a café, the less you think, love, theorise, sing, fence, etc., the more you save, the larger your treasure, your capital, becomes, the things acquired by you.

From this point of view a man without money, without things, is nothing. Things and money give him weight and importance in society, they make him important even in his own eyes.

Everything that you yourself cannot do, your money can do for you. Money can eat, drink, go to balls, to the theatre, it can travel, acquire works of art, learning, historical curios, political power.

In his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* Marx quotes the monologue of Timon of Athens in which Shakespeare speaks of the omnipotence of the "yellow devil":

This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions, bless the accursed;
Make the hoar leprosy adored, place thieves
And give them title, knee and approbation
With senators on the bench....

To Marx's mind Shakespeare "excellently depicts the real nature of *money*", stressing especially two properties of money.¹

"It is the visible divinity—the transformation of all human and natural properties into their contraries, the universal confounding and distorting of things.

"It is the common whore, the common procurer of people and nations.... Money is the alienated *ability of mankind*."²

These ideas, inspired by the poetry of Shakespeare and Goethe, were later developed by Marx in *A Con-*

¹ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, pp. 323, 324.

² Ibid., pp. 324, 325.

tribution to the Critique of Political Economy and Capital.

In a world which has been turned inside out, a world of alienation, as the young Marx demonstrated, acquisition becomes the aim of life, and a utilitarian consumer attitude towards things appears in place of the development of truly human requirements. The thing becomes the measure of the man, and not the reverse. Material wealth takes the place of the wealth of human abilities.

The world of alienation is a world of crude, primitive requirements reduced to possessing. "Private property has made us so stupid and one-sided that an object is only *ours* when we have it— ... or when it is directly possessed, eaten, drunk, worn, inhabited, etc."¹ In the place of all physical and mental senses there has come the sense of having.

As a result things dominate man not only in the process of labour, but also at home. In concentrating his interest on things, man does not notice that he is becoming their servant, that they are dictating not only the character and pace of his labour, but also the character and style of his leisure, the character and style of his private relations with other people.

The removal of alienation in a world organised in a human way will mean not only a change in the character of man's relations with man, but also a change in the whole content of his life.

"Assume *man* to be *man*," writes Marx, "and his relationship to the world to be a human one: then you can exchange love only for love, trust for trust, etc. If you want to enjoy art, you must be an artistically cultivated person; if you want to exercise influence over other people, you must be a person with a stimulating and encouraging effect on other people.

¹ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 300.

Every one of your relations to man and to nature must be a *specific expression*, corresponding to the object of your will, of your *real individual* life. If you love without evoking love in return—that is, if your loving as loving does not produce reciprocal love; if through a *living expression* of yourself as a loving person you do not make yourself a *beloved one*, then your love is impotent—a misfortune.”¹

Bourgeois political economy with its self-sufficient principle of value wealth is branded by Marx as the consistent preaching of the negation of man.

In communist society the wealth of things becomes what it should be—not the aim of man’s life, but merely a means for full-blooded human activity. “... In place of the *wealth* and *poverty* of political economy come the *rich human being* and the rich *human need*.”²

Marx will later return again and again to this idea in *Capital* and the preparatory works for it. He proclaims as the highest wealth, the highest capital of society, not that which man produces, but man himself, “the universality of the requirements, abilities, pleasures, productive forces, etc., of individuals”.³ In communist society man is the aim of all social production, and material values are merely a means, condition, basis for achieving this aim.

Having revealed the point of departure (self-alienation) and the aim, Marx outlines the way of advancing towards this aim, the way of transcending alienation. This question still remains a subject of most heated discussion between sociologists and

¹ Karl Marx, “Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844”. Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 326.

² *Ibid.*, p. 304.

³ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie. (Rohentwurf) 1857-1858*, Berlin, 1953, S. 387.

Marxologists of different countries.

Marx proceeds perfectly clearly and unambiguously from the fact that the abolition of alienation rests primarily upon the abolition of private property. Private property is "the product, the result, the necessary consequence, of *alienated labour*"¹, economic alienation.

All the nuances and aspects of alienation in its different forms (political, religious, philosophical, moral, etc.) accumulate in economic alienation. The whole of human servitude finds expression in the servitude of the worker in his relation to production. "...All relations of servitude are but modifications and consequences of this relation."² Here Marx is essentially formulating the idea of the leading role of production relations in the life of society.

For Hegel all alienation amounted to the alienation of the idea, and the transcendence of this type of alienation is also possible in the "consciousness" of the subject. But because he realises the servile nature of his relations with the world, his alienation does not disappear, it merely increases.

In order to learn to swim it is not enough to imagine oneself swimming, in order to become free it is not enough to regard oneself as being free. "In order to abolish the *idea* of private property, the *idea* of communism is quite sufficient. It takes *actual* communist action to abolish actual private property."³

Marx does not doubt that "history will lead to it", but he does not comfort himself with the illusions which were so characteristic of the utopians, that the abolition of private property will take place quickly

¹ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 279.

² Ibid., p. 280.

³ Ibid., p. 313.

and painlessly. His historical sense told him unerringly that this would be "a very rough and protracted process".¹

Private property did not appear suddenly, at the wave of a magic wand, it went through many centuries of development, assuming different forms. Its development has not yet finished. It has now assumed the form of industrial capital, and will continue to grow in this form until it invades and dominates all the pores of society, until it becomes a world historical force in its most universal form.

In this developed form, full of life, private property engenders its death, its opposite—the oppressed, alienated labour of industrial workers.

From this moment it progresses towards its own abolition, but its way to death is the same as its way to maturity: it appears in the different forms and stages of the formation of communism.

Communism, as Marx shows, evidently having in mind the initial mistakes in the creation of communes of the poor in America and England, first appears as crude egalitarian communism. This "communism" expresses the protest against the barbaric nature of private property with barbaric means. It is still so much "under the spell" of private property with the inequality to which the latter gives rise, that it wants to reduce everybody to a common level (right up to the community of women). It seeks to destroy everything that distinguishes one man from another, everything which is not capable of being possessed by *all*.

Therefore "crude and barrack-room communism" abstracts itself from the talent, from the personality of man. It longs not to abolish the alienated labour of the worker, but to turn everyone into workers.

This type of "communism", which "negates" the

¹ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 313.

personality of man in every sphere, is at the same time the negation of "the entire world of culture and civilisation". Its ideal is the unnatural simplicity of the poor man who has few needs. This ideal testifies to a "simplicity" which has not only failed to go beyond private property, but has not yet even reached it.

In this type of "communism" the opposing nature of labour and capital is not abolished. Labour (in its most elementary form) appears as the category in which every person is placed, and capital as the acknowledged universality and power of the community.

Marx branded this "crude communism" as a manifestation of "the vileness of private property". It is not hard to see that this criticism still retains its theoretical and practical importance to the present day, that it helps the struggle against the vulgarisation and discrediting of great communist ideas by lovers of ultra-revolutionary demagoguery and barrack-room methods of making mankind happy.

The second form about which Marx speaks, having in mind, first and foremost, certain ideas about the future which were characteristic of the utopian socialists and petty-bourgeois democrats of that time, is communism which has not yet lost its *political* nature. It is democratic or despotic. It remains captive to private property and is infected by it.

Finally, the third form presupposes the "positive" transcendence of private property as the genuine removal of alienation in all its forms—on the basis of the preservation and development of the whole wealth of human culture and civilisation. This communism equals fully-developed humanism; it is "the *genuine* resolution of the conflict between man and nature and between man and man".¹

¹ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 296.

The entire movement of history is the actual act of the genesis of this communism, the birth act of its empirical existence. The resolution of this problem "is therefore by no means merely a problem of understanding, but a *real* problem of life, which *philosophy* could not solve precisely because it conceived this problem as *merely* a theoretical one".¹

A year later Marx was to formulate this idea in his famous aphorism: "The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it."²

And fifteen to twenty years later he was to develop with great profundity and detail in his economic works the ideas which he expressed in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*.

These were the ideas of the opposing nature of labour and capital, the worker as a commodity, commodity fetishism, the turning of the worker into a live machine, into a part of a partial machine. The ideas of the alienation of the human personality in the world of commodity relations where the entrepreneur is the personification of capital and the proletarian the personification of labour force.

Instead of the philosophical concept of "alienation" Marx is to make increasing use of the precise and unambiguous categories of economics. But this is more a question of terminology, and not of principle.

The *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* is a brilliant sketch of a new world outlook, a sketch of a programme, the elaboration of which was to become the main concern of the rest of Karl Marx's life.

This work had an unusual fate. The world learnt of

¹ Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 302.

² Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach". Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 8.

it almost ninety years after its creation and almost fifty years after the death of the author. But it immediately attracted as much attention as if it had just been written on the most topical subject. Since then piles of books on the *Manuscripts* have been published in the various countries, the stream of literature about them is constantly increasing, and the disputes are becoming more and more bitter. It is as if the further we move from the moment when this work was written, the more topical it becomes.

The problems raised in it have become an arena of conflict between the most different views on Marxism—from the vulgar-dogmatic to the vulgar-revisionist.

And the interesting thing is that both “extremes” have something in common. Both distinguish between two Marxes—the young and the mature. Only they do so in different ways: the former regarding the young Marx as the “true” Marx, and the latter the mature Marx as the “true” one.

Both approaches show a distorted, primitive conception of Marxism. This is explained by the fact that through mental inertia, Marxism is measured by doctrinaire criteria. But the *Manuscripts* and *Capital* do not oppose each other as two doctrines, two complete systems of philosophy with “humanism” at the centre of the first and “economism” at the centre of the second.

If they do oppose each other it is merely as the source and the summit. As a work where a new method of analysis of universally known phenomena is discovered and a work where it is put in operation. As a philosophico-economic work and an economico-philosophical work.

Marxism is not a doctrine, but a method, as its founders were fond of emphasising. Therefore it cannot be understood by interpreting “ready-made” for-

mulations from various works. The living soul of Marxism can be understood only in motion, in the genesis of ideas, in constant perfection of method.

Doctrinaire narrow-mindedness sees no "humanism" in *Capital*, because it does not understand the place of this work by Marx in the whole of his legacy, it does not understand for the sake of what human ideals he made his painstaking study of "economic man". It does not see Marx's humanism, because it is used to regarding the sentimental philanthropy of philosophising daydreamers as "humanism".

On the other hand, the critics of the young Marx, who suffer from the same narrow-mindedness, are not capable of appreciating the great significance of the *Manuscripts* for the formation of Marxism. They turn up their noses suspiciously when they hear about "alienation" and "humanism"—are these concepts sufficiently Marxist? They cannot pack the wealth of Marx's ideas into the Procrustean bed of the primitive schematic interpretation of Marxism, the only one they are capable of understanding, and are therefore inclined to distinguish between the "pure" and the "impure" Marx, the "mature" and the "immature" Marx.

Marx's humanism was not a temporary theoretical passion, as the voluntary or involuntary ideologists of what Marx branded as "crude communism" would like to think. Humanism is not an appendage to Marxism, but the very heart of Marxism, the inner spring which gives it strength and life, which makes it the world outlook of the millions fighting for the happiness of mankind.

Marx's humanism, as it appears already in the *Manuscripts*, is not an infantile Feuerbachian apology for anthropology, the deifying love of two people and their closeness to nature. It is a teaching dictated by

hatred of all forms of the oppression and suppression of the individual, it is a teaching which bears within itself the mighty charge of social transformations.

The *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (and the related articles in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*) constitute a most important juncture in Marx's spiritual development. Whereas the works written before this characterise his *path to Marxism*, the works after it characterise the development, concretisation and elaboration of Marxism in all its parts and, first and foremost, in the sphere of political economy.

The year 1844 may be called the year of the birth of the scientific world outlook. But we cannot name the year in which the formation of this world outlook was *completed*. It continued in all the works of Marx and Engels right up to their death. It continues to the present day and will continue as long as human society exists.

IX

A Genius and His Environment

Your chief characteristic?
Singleness of purpose.
Your favourite maxim?
Nihil humani a me alienum puto.

From *Confessions* by Karl Marx¹

By the time the main features of Marx's world outlook had formed, his personality had formed too, the personality of a man in whom the scientist and the revolutionary were merged into one. Marx was a great revolutionary in science and the first scientist in the revolution, who brought about a truly Copernican upheaval in philosophy and views on society, "forcing" the whole of revolutionary theory and practice to revolve in the orbits of strict science.

Marx showed himself to be the model man who, by delving more deeply than his contemporaries into the cultural heritage of the past and critically reshaping it, outstripped his time more than any of his great predecessors.

Being himself a universally developed person, Marx manifested himself universally in the creative respect also. It would be difficult to name a sphere of human activity which remained untouched by his questing thought. We are quite justified in talking of Marx as a

¹ *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 266.

philosopher and economist, sociologist and historian, revolutionary and organiser, publicist and linguist, literary specialist and journalist.

We know that Marx intended, after completing his work on *Capital*, to write a *Logic*, a work on the history of philosophy, a book on Balzac's writing, and a drama about the Gracchus brothers. He left behind him some original studies in the sphere of mathematics, and the history of technology, and he was interested in the achievements of physics, chemistry, biology, and evolutionary theory.

With his inherent purposefulness Marx focused his encyclopaedic knowledge and universally developed abilities on the solution of economic problems, which became the main object of his scientific research. A narrow professional specialist could never have produced anything like *Capital*.

His personality was outwardly striking as well, a fact which even those who knew Marx only fleetingly and were alien to Marxism could not help noticing.

The Russian liberal man of letters P. Annenkov met Marx in Brussels in March 1846 and wrote that Marx was the type of person who consisted of energy, will and indestructible conviction, and was extremely striking in appearance also. With his head of bushy black hair, his hairy hands, in a coat buttoned askew, he had the appearance of a man with the right to command respect however he appeared to you and whatever he did. All his movements were angular, but bold and self-assured. His whole style of behaviour with people was marked by independence and differed from what was generally acceptable. And his harsh, metallic voice was perfectly in keeping with the categorical nature of his judgements on people and things.

The 28-year-old Marx impressed Annenkov strongly as a man convinced of his vocation to rule man's



Wilhelm Weitling

minds and lead them after him, a man who was disgusted with the pretentious ignorance of all "false prophets" and "saviours of mankind".

Annenkov describes a meeting of the Communist Correspondence Committee at which a clash took place between Marx and Wilhelm Weitling, one of the theoreticians of utopian communism in its crude, egalitarian form. Weitling caused a sensation in Germany with his confused but striking sermons and obtained a certain following among the workers.

In reply to Marx's sharp question about the theoretical postulates by which he proposed to be governed in his activity, Weitling began to explain inconsistently that his aim was not to create new economic theories, but to open the workers' eyes to the horror of their position, to teach them to unite in democratic and communist communes.

Frowning angrily, Marx suddenly interrupted Weitling and remarked sarcastically that to rouse the population without giving them any firm, well-considered reasons for their activity would be simply to deceive them. To call to the worker without any strictly scientific ideas or constructive doctrine was equivalent to vain dishonest play at preaching which assumes an inspired prophet on the one side and on the other only gaping asses.

Weitling's pale cheeks coloured. He began to speak pompously of his services and remarked, in particular, that his modest spade-work was perhaps of greater weight for the common cause than criticism and arm-chair analysis of doctrines far from the world of the suffering and afflicted people.

At these words the enraged Marx thumped so hard with his fist on the table that the lamp on it rang and shook. He jumped up saying: "Ignorance never yet helped anybody!"¹

¹ *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 272.

Many people who met Marx were shocked by the harshness with which he pronounced "judgement" on people and doctrines. Philistine memoir writers and biographers of Marx have often complained of his impatient severity, his "dictatorial" ways, his "Mephistophelian" contempt for those who did not share his views, etc.

The disputes which Marx conducted with his opponents did take on an emotional hue quite frequently. For Marx, a born politician and revolutionary, social science was a sphere where the clash of opinions appeared as a clash of different socio-class positions, and not as the academically impassive and hypocritically polite disputes of privat-docents who try to perfect the art of putting on a good face while playing a losing game.

On questions of principle, Marx's judgement was not lenient, even if it was a question of people to whom he was bound by many years of comradeship. Himself an exceptionally single-minded person, Marx did not use a double standard for measuring other people's actions: one on the "human" plane, and the other on the scientific, "business" level. A man who "deviated" on questions of scientific theory or revolutionary practice, in so doing committed a moral error too, in Marx's eyes, and lost his respect, not only as a thinker or revolutionary, but also as a person. And vice versa, the slightest unscrupulousness in anyone's personal relations served Marx as weighty grounds for not trusting the person both in the scientific and the political respects.

The old maxim "Plato is dear to me, but dearer still is truth" found full embodiment in Marx's relations with his friends. He never forgave anyone for betraying the truth. Disagreements on scientific questions always led him ultimately to the breaking

off of the friendship and then to a bitter polemic battle.

This was the case with Bruno Bauer, Adolf Rutenberg, Arnold Ruge, Pierre Proudhon, Mikhail Bakunin, Moses Hess, Wilhelm Weitling and Georg Herwegh.

The young Marx made such rapid progress in his intellectual development, that his like-minded friends of yesterday were left behind. But it was not this in itself which aroused his polemic anger: he was certainly not a man who paraded his knowledge and abilities. He could always understand and forgive ignorance born of lack of knowledge, but never pardoned the complacent and militant ambitions of scholarly ignoramuses who claimed to teach and lead others. In such cases ignorance had ceased to be a personal shortcoming and became a social danger. Marx did not spare any efforts to denounce it.

He showed an almost unerring intuition in the assessment of this or that person. He not only saw clearly the social position which this person occupied at the given moment but could predict where this position would take him in the future. His critical attacks might at first seem undeserved, but after a while it transpired that Marx was right.

The "terrorist" of thought Bruno Bauer later began to work for the reactionary *Kreuz-Zeitung*. Adolf Rutenberg, who began his career as a political martyr, sank to editor of the *Preussischer Staats-Anzeiger*. Arnold Ruge, who in the early 1840s had rung the bell of political struggle on the pages of his publications, towards the end of his life became a supporter of Bismarck.

As for Weitling and Proudhon, as Mehring so rightly remarks, they were destined to share the same fame and the same sad fate. At the beginning of their activity Marx, more than anyone else, showered them



Karl Marx and Frederick Engels
among socialists and communists in Paris
Drawing by A. Venetsien

with praise and saw in their person the awakening self-consciousness of the working class. But Weitling could not advance beyond the limited horizons of the German artisan, and Proudhon those of the French petty bourgeois. The wave of historical development swept them on the rocks, and they parted company with Marx who magnificently completed what they had begun.

Marx, however, continued to give Weitling financial assistance even after the break with him, although he himself was in very straitened circumstances. In this connection Hess wrote: "It was to be expected from you that your hostility towards him would not go so far as to close your purse hermetically so long as there was still something in it."¹

One day Marx thought that his intuition had deceived him: the mistrust which he felt for Mikhail Bakunin was not confirmed by the facts of the latter's revolutionary activity. Marx immediately repented of the unfriendly actions which he had taken against Bakunin when he was editor of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. He made it up with Bakunin and "stood up for him".²

Years passed and the schismatic position adopted by Bakunin in the International showed that Marx's intuition had not entirely deceived him.

Marx once remarked: "I make friends with few people, but then hold fast to them."³ And indeed he had few real, true friends. But what crystal clear people they were and how devoted to the cause of the proletariat! Wilhelm Wolff, Joseph Weydemeyer, Wilhelm Liebknecht, and Georg Weerth....

¹ Franz Mehring, *Karl Marx. The Story of His Life*, Co-vici, Friede Publishers, New York, 1935, p. 145.

² Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 30, S. 498.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 488.

Marx was able to hate so strongly because he was capable of such profound feelings of love and friendship. Two people played an exceptional role in his life: Jenny's love and Engels' friendship were for Marx the most fortunate gifts of fate.

Jenny was not only a wife to him, but his closest friend and counsellor, and the first critic of his works. Marx (like his friend Heine) greatly valued her humour, her fine aesthetic taste, her extensive knowledge which in certain spheres was not inferior even to his own. He admired Jenny's literary talent and considered her a real virtuoso in the epistolary art.

She possessed a splendid literary style, which, to quote Wilhelm Liebknecht, combined the "indignant severity of a Tacitus with the deadly satire of a Juvenal and the holy wrath of a Dante".¹ Nevertheless Marx continued to perfect himself in this art with Jenny's help.

A most interesting letter from Jenny to Marx written in June 1844 has survived. In it she criticises Marx's style and gives him advice. "...Don't write with too much rancour and irritation. You know how much more effect your other articles have had. Write either in a matter-of-fact and subtle way or humorously and lightly. Please, dear heart of mine, let your pen run over the paper, even if it should on occasion stumble and fall, and the sentence with it. Your thoughts all the same stand erect like the grenadiers of the old guard, so honourably firm and courageous, and they could say like the old guard: *elle meurt mais elle ne se rend pas*. (It dies, but does not surrender.—Tr.) What does it matter if occasionally the uniform hangs a bit loosely and is not so tightly buttoned up? What is so very nice about the French soldiers is their free and easy appearance. When you

¹ *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 103.

think of our stilted Prussians, doesn't it make you shudder? —Just slacken the strappings and remove the cravat and helmet—let the participles take their course and set down the words just as they come of themselves. Such an army does not have to march in such strict order. And your troops are taking the field, are they not? Good luck to the general....”¹

According to all those who knew them well, Marx and Jenny were a happy and cheerful couple. No sufferings or trials could weaken or cloud their love. On the contrary, misfortune merely seemed to strengthen their feeling. In maturity Marx continued to feel for his wife the same tender and ardent love of the “Orlando Furioso” as in his student years.

In 1856 he wrote a passionate letter to Jenny who was away on a short visit to Germany and who by that time was already forty-two and the mother of a large family. A remarkable human document for its tenderness and strength of feeling, this letter is also full of profound thought. It is so characteristic of Marx's personality, and his youthful love which did not age with the years, that it is worth quoting detailed extracts:

“My sweetheart,

“I write to you again, because I am alone and because it troubles me to hold a dialogue with you forever in my head, without your knowing anything of it or hearing or being able to answer me ... I see you before me in person, I treat you tenderly, I kiss you from head to foot, I go down on my knees before you, and I groan: ‘I love you, Madame.’ And I do love you indeed, more than the Moor of Venice ever loved. The false and rotten world perceives all characters as false and rotten. Who of my many slanderers

¹ “Jenny Marx to Karl Marx, about June 21, 1844”. Marx, Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 579.

and backbiting enemies has ever reproached me for being called upon to play the role of first lover in a second-class theatre? And yet it is true. If these rogues had the wit, they would have painted 'the production and exchange relations' on one side and me at your feet on the other. Look to this picture and to that—they would have written underneath. But they are stupid rogues and will remain stupid, *in seculum seculorum* (for all time—*Ed.*).

"...You need only be removed from me through a mere dream, and I know immediately that time has merely served it (my love—*Ed.*) as the sun and rain serve the plant, for growth. My love for you, as soon as you are away from me, appears for what it is, a giant; in it all the energy of my spirit and all the character of my heart are concentrated. I feel myself a man again, because I feel a great passion, and the diversity which study and modern education develop in us, and the scepticism, with which we necessarily criticise all subjective and objective impressions, are designed to make us all small and weak and whining and irresolute. But love, not for Feuerbach's man, not for Moleschott's metabolism, not for the proletariat, but love for the beloved, for you, makes a man a man again.

"You will laugh, my sweetheart, and ask why I have suddenly plunged into rhetoric? But could I press your sweet white heart to my heart, I would be silent and say not a word. Since I cannot kiss with my lips, I must kiss with my tongue and write words. Indeed I could even write poetry....

"There are indeed many women in the world, and some of them are beautiful. But where could I find a face again, in which every feature, every wrinkle, awakes the greatest and sweetest memories of my life? In your sweet countenance I read my infinite sorrows, my irreparable losses (a reference to the

death of Marx's son, Edgar—*Ed.*), and I kiss the sorrow away when I kiss your sweet face. 'Buried in her arms, resurrected by her kisses'—that is, in your arms and by your kisses, and I give the Brahmans and Pythagoras their teaching on rebirth and Christianity its teaching on the resurrection."¹

In spite of the burden of family worries, Jenny was Marx's tireless and unfailing helper in his scientific and political work. For many years she was his indispensable secretary, copied out his works, and even acted as his "messenger" on party errands. She conducted a correspondence with many active figures in the international working-class movement and took a great interest in everything connected with this movement. She regarded herself proudly as a party worker. In a letter to Lassalle she remarked not without humour:

"Excuse this hasty little note. I have so much in my head and so much on my hands, and must also go into the town today, which will keep my feet busy for two or three hours.

"As you see, I still belong to the party of movement, to the go-ahead, mile-covering party and, in spite of everything, am a good party-goer or runner, as you wish."²

In the Marxes' house, in spite of the extremely modest life-style, political exiles always found refuge, help and comfort. Wilhelm Liebknecht recalled: "Mrs. Marx dominated us (the young exiles from Germany—*Author*) perhaps even more strongly than Marx himself. In her dwelt pride, an awareness of her own dignity.... For me she was sometimes an Iphigenia, who tamed and mollified the barbarians, and

¹ Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 29, S. 532-36.

² F. Lassalle, *Nachgelassene Briefe und Schriften*, Stuttgart-Berlin, 1922, Bd. III, S. 355.



Jenny von Westphalen

sometimes a Leonora, who give peace to a man rent by inner struggle and doubts; for me she was mother, friend, confidant and counsellor. She was and remains for me the ideal woman. And I repeat, if I did not collapse morally and physically in London, it was mainly thanks to her."¹

Jenny delighted all Marx's visitors, friends and acquaintances by her unusual beauty, grace and wit. Heine, Herwegh and Freiligrath enthused about her. Even sober politicians became poets when they talked about Jenny. The tailor Friedrich Lessner, one of the organisers of the First International, wrote the following: "His house was open to every reliable comrade. I shall never forget the pleasant hours which, like many others, I spent among Marx's family. Mrs. Marx produced a particularly vivid impression. She was a tall, very beautiful woman, very distinguished and yet so good-natured, lovable, witty and so free from pride and stiffness that one felt as much at ease and at home in her presence as with one's own mother or sister.... She was full of enthusiasm for the working-class movement, and every success, no matter how small, against the bourgeoisie gave her the greatest satisfaction and pleasure."²

And, of course, Jenny more than anyone else was affected by everything that concerned her husband. When a campaign against the revolutionaries of 1848 began in the reactionary German press and poison arrows of slander were fired at Marx, Jenny was so upset that she fell ill. After the publication of the first volume of *Capital*, she was deeply concerned that this epoch-making work was totally ignored in Germany. She was pained by the fact that Marx's

¹ W. Liebknecht, *Karl Marx zum Gedächtnis. Ein Lebensabriss und Erinnerungen*, Nürnberg, 1896, S. 65-66.

² *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, pp. 163-64.

genius did not find due recognition and, two years before her death, rejoiced like a child at a brief mention of him in an English journal. Marx recalled this bitterly in a letter to Engels after his wife's death.

When Jenny died at the end of 1881, Engels made a remark which startled many people: "The Moor has also died." He knew that these two people literally could not live without each other—and that Marx's days were numbered. And he was right.

Mankind has many poetic tales, sagas and legends of love. And the story of the love of Marx and Jenny is one of the finest.

In friendship Marx was capable of just as strong and constant feelings, which did not age with the years, as in love. Marx and Engels endured all their trials and tribulations together, rarely parted for long, and worked at their common cause jointly.

Although outwardly Marx's life may not seem very rich in vivid colours and unusual events, it is full of the tremendous spiritual excitement of the revolutionary, the political activist, the publicist and scientist; it abounds with seething passions, struggle and daring, the selfless service of truth and the cause of the proletarian struggle.

His life is the whole historical epoch of the formation of the class-consciousness of the workers of Europe.

He was the organiser of the first small cell of the communist party, the Communist League, and together with Engels the author of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, an inspired and clear programme of struggle for the reorganisation of society. His publicistic articles in the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* were bold fighters on the barricades of the Revolution of 1848. And from the autumn of 1864 Marx left his scientific studies to devote himself entirely to the affairs of the First International. He was the heart of

this society. By uniting the working-class movement of the various countries, seeking to channel the various forms of non-proletarian, pre-Marxian socialism (Mazzini, Proudhon, Bakunin, English liberal trade-unionism, Lassalleian shifts to the Right in Germany, etc.) into joint activity, and fighting against the theories of all these sects and schools, Marx forged the united tactics of the proletarian struggle of the working class in the various countries. With youthful enthusiasm he followed the revolutionary battles of the Paris Communards and analysed the activity of the Commune.

All this in itself refutes the bourgeois myth of Marx as an ivory-tower scientist. Having devoted a considerable part of his life to such a great cause as the elaboration of the scientific world outlook, Marx never grudged time for direct political and organising work.

When one of Marx's friends Ludwig Kugelmann tried to persuade him to refrain from political propaganda and, above all, to engage in work on the third volume of *Capital*, because this was more important for the cause of the revolution, Marx became angry and broke off relations with him.

His life in politics was inseparable from his life in science, one sphere of activity fertilised and stimulated the other. And in both he fought equally mercilessly for the purity of ends and means, considering all deviations from this as shameful.

Marx regarded the demagogic use of revolutionary slogans to conceal egoistic aims as the worst crime against the cause of the proletariat. He hated the false brilliance of bragging political intriguers who liked to conceal their lack of talent and their banality behind fine phrases. Behind all this Marx unerringly detected squalid, hypocritical philistinism.

He would not forgive either empty phrases or

empty posturing. Marx and Engels mercilessly ridiculed the leader of the German Social-Democrats Ferdinand Lassalle with his pursuit of cheap popularity, his conceited self-esteem, his manners of a provincial actor playing the genius and aristocrat, with his mixture of frivolity and sentimentality, mercenary-mindedness and chivalrous manners. There was no end to the malicious nicknames they showered upon this "Marquis of Posa.

Marx had a similar attitude to the French petty-bourgeois politician and historian Louis Blanc.

"...Neither of us cares a straw for popularity. A proof of this is, for example, that, because of aversion to any personality cult, I have never permitted the numerous expressions of appreciation from various countries, with which I was pestered during the existence of the International, to reach the realm of publicity, and have never answered them, except occasionally by a rebuke. When Engels and I first joined the secret Communist Society (the Communist League—*Ed.*) we made it a condition that everything tending to encourage superstitious belief in authority was to be removed from the Rules."¹

You can tell a person not only from his likes, but also from his dislikes, not only from his sympathies, but also from his antipathies. Say who is your enemy and I will say who you are.

One of the petty-bourgeois democrats, Karl Schurz, who heard Marx speak in 1848 in Cologne at the Congress of Democratic Associations remembered to the end of his days the sharply sarcastic tone with which Marx pronounced the word "Bürger" (bourgeois, philistine).

¹ Frederick Engels, "Marx to Wilhelm Blos in Hamburg, November 10, 1877". Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, 1957, p. 291.

In his articles, pamphlets, books and letters Marx rewarded a whole horde of philistines according to their deserts. It was of no concern to him whether his opponent was worthy of his criticism, and often nonentities became the object of his inexhaustible wit. Heine's comment about Lessing applies in full measure to Marx: "In killing his opponents, he thereby bestowed immortality upon them", he enveloped, as it were, the little writers with his witty ridicule, his splendid humour, and now they are preserved for ever in his works, like insects in a piece of amber.¹

Throughout Marx's life philistines (from Napoleon III to newspaper reporters) tried to avenge themselves on him with slander, persecution and lies, and if this did not help, by ignoring his works entirely. Nevertheless, in spite of all the difficult trials, Marx could say proudly that he had never given way to a philistine on anything, never been "under the philistine", and had always been ready to give battle to him. "Yes, in spite of everything," he remarked in a letter, "*the philistine above me* will always be a better motto for us than *under the philistine*."²

Marx was equally merciless both to the philistine in politics and to the philistine in science.

In science philistinism showed itself primarily as cowardliness, baseness of thought, which fears to draw inescapable conclusions from the observed facts, fears to follow the actual logic of things without reservation, regardless of all considerations outside science.

The philistine in science is concerned not with the search for truth, but with the concealment and falsification of truth. By his dishonest apologetics he

¹ *Heines Werke im fünf Banden*, Bd. 5, Weimar, 1956, S. 90.

² Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 30, S. 495.

endeavours to strengthen the position of the ruling classes, and thereby his own too. He buries truth in the sticky slime of pseudo-truthful talk, wraps it firmly in scientific-like garb.

The philistine seeks to make science an instrument for the attainment of his own aims which have nothing to do with science. He uses it for "mean purposes". "But when a man seeks to *accommodate* science to a viewpoint which is derived not from science itself (however erroneous it may be) but from *outside, from alien, external interests*, then I call him 'base'."¹

Marx addresses these words, sharp as the lash of a whip, or a slap in the face, to the falsifiers and sycophants of science such as Malthus, Roscher and Bastiat. Marx feels an infinite contempt for the clergyman Malthus because "this wretch" only draws such conclusions from the given scientific premises (which he invariably *steals*), as will be "*agreeable*" to... the ruling classes.² He fabricates scientific conclusions "with an eye" to these classes, but his conclusions are "*ruthless* as far as they concern the subjugated classes". Here "he is not only *ruthless*; he *affects* ruthlessness; he takes a cynical pleasure in it...".³

Acting as a parasite in the field of science, such a "scientist" usually turns to plagiarism, but here too he remains true to himself. "The inventor of an idea may exaggerate it in all honesty; when the plagiarist exaggerates it, he always makes 'a business' of such an exaggeration."⁴

¹ Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus-Value*, Part II, Moscow, 1975, p. 119.

² *Ibid.*, p. 118.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 120.

⁴ *Ibid.*

In this angry denunciation of scientific baseness of thought Marx reveals not only his antipathies, but also his sympathies: his idea of the true scientist, of disinterested and selfless service of the truth.

Marx himself can rightly be called the personification of questing scientific thought. For him creative thinking was the highest pleasure in life. He always suffered greatly when something diverted him from scientific work. Even his exhausting bouts of illness were nothing compared to the pain he felt at the inactivity which they imposed upon him.

Marx's scientific conscientiousness was not only irreproachable, but even, as Engels thought, excessive. "...Although Engels carried exactitude to the extreme, he sometimes became impatient at the scrupulousness of Marx, who would not put a sentence on paper unless he could prove it in a dozen different ways."¹

In Marx the great thinker was combined with the great critic, but his criticism—both in youth and in maturity—was directed primarily against himself. Marx confessed that "it is also a characteristic of mine that if four weeks later I see something that I have finished writing and I find it unsatisfactory I rewrite it again entirely".²

The preparatory manuscripts for *Capital* show that the main ideas of the first volume (and the following ones as well) were discovered and expounded by Marx already in 1857-58, but it took ten years of very hard work before this volume was finally sent to the publishers.

By then (1867) the remaining volumes, including the "historical section", that is, "Theories of Surplus-Value", were advanced to such an extent that

¹ *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 90.

² Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 30, S. 622.

Marx himself hoped to complete the whole work in a year at the very most. He was unable to finish it before his death, however, (the task of preparing the second and third volumes of *Capital* for the printers fell to Engels). It transpired that it was essential to study Russian material for one of the sections, and Marx settled down to learn Russian.

Marx did not consider himself justified in expressing an opinion on any question until he had studied all the relevant literature, regardless of the "calibre" of the author. In *Capital* he really did "mete out judgement of history" rewarding each economist, no matter how small his contribution, according to his deserts.

Capital is an unparalleled work, titanic if only in range of the material, for it contains a synthesis of the whole history of economic (and not only economic) thought in all its forms and manifestations. It contains a synthesis of Marx's spiritual development over his whole lifetime—of the whole cultural heritage of the past. This work is also unparalleled because for the first time the logic of the progression of the capitalist mode of production towards its inevitable collapse is revealed.

Capital is not only an economic work. It analyses all the relations and aspects of the life of bourgeois society as a whole. It provides a firm scientific basis for the political struggle of the working class for its emancipation, and for the strategy and tactics of the world communist movement. This is why, to quote Marx's own words, it is "the most terrible missile" fired at the bourgeoisie. It is a death sentence pronounced upon the bourgeoisie without the right of appeal.

Capital is also a literary and stylistic masterpiece. One gets profound aesthetic enjoyment from reading it. It is an "artistic whole". And this is true not only

in respect to composition, balance and strict logic of exposition. It is also true literally, for here Marx shows himself to be a master of the written word.

Marx attached great importance to the literary form of the exposition of his thoughts. He used to ridicule scholars who regarded dreary, dry officialness as an essential attribute of scholarliness. Together with Voltaire he was fond of saying that "tous les genres sont bons, excepté le genre ennuyeux".

In the afterword to the second German edition of *Capital* Marx quoted comments on his literary style from the press of the day. Even the English press, which was openly hostile to his views, remarked that in *Capital* "the presentation of the subject invests the driest economic questions with a certain peculiar charm". The *St. Petersburg Journal* said that Marx's "presentation of the subject ... is distinguished ... by its clearness, and ... by an unusual liveliness" and that in this respect his work "in no way resembles" the works of German scholars, "who write their books in a language so dry and obscure that the heads of ordinary mortals are cracked by it".

But if Marx was able to expound such a complex subject as the one he was dealing with in *Capital* with an enviable clarity and vividness, if he managed to spice his analysis of the forms of value, commodity fetishism and the universal law of capitalist accumulation with humour and irony, with what dazzling brilliance his literary talent showed itself in his polemical and publicistic works!

Marx had mastered to perfection the art of composing the strong, dynamic and unusually capacious sentence. He delighted in punning. Even on his death-bed he remarked in a letter to one of his daughters that he could not talk to her without making a pun.

Marx's teachers in the sphere of writing were Lessing, Goethe, Shakespeare, Dante, Cervantes and

Heine. He constantly reread them. But he was more than just an obedient pupil: in some respects he even went further than his great teachers.

Marx, more than any other great writer, knew how to make "senses ... become ... theoreticians", how to infuse a literary image with profound thought. More than anyone else he was able to reveal the tension of the dialectic in the structure of the sentence itself. He does not examine firstly "on the one hand", then "on the other", and finally the "synthesis". In one and the same sentence, one and the same image, he strives to give both the "clash" of the different aspects and their synthesis. He boldly brings together as antipodes subject and predicate, forcing them to clash with each other and turn immediately into their own opposite.

In this dialectical somersault of concepts, in their turning inside-out, lies the unexcelled charm and originality of Marx's style.

"Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions."

"...Criticism is no passion of the head, it is the head of passion. It is not a lancet, it is a weapon."

"They make the worship of them [ideas] into a cult, but they do not cultivate them."

"...An end which requires unjustified means is no justifiable end."

"The cobbler Jakob Böhme was a great philosopher. Many a philosopher of repute is merely a great cobbler."

"Cruelty is a characteristic feature of laws dictated by cowardice, for cowardice can be energetic only by being cruel."

It is as if the very essence of social phenomena in their rise and fall, their development and negation, directed Marx's hand in the writing of these and many other similar phrases, as if the Life Dialectic itself

had found most perfect and most laconic expression in the dialectic of concepts.

Here each phrase contains a rapidly unwinding spring of thought. Each phrase is so capacious, contains so much "condensed" content engendered in the clash of image and idea, that it acquires an aphoristic ring. One could compile a whole book of Marx's aphorisms.

With the same aphoristic laconism, depth and irony which frequently verges on sarcasm, Marx described human characters. His ability to paint a profound psychological and social portrait in a few strokes might be envied by many a high-class professional writer.

Unfortunately Marx's literary, stylistic skill has as yet been little studied. An examination of it would help to reveal more of its essence, to penetrate the creative laboratory of one of the greatest geniuses of mankind.

Marx polished *Capital* long and carefully to obtain maximum fullness of subject matter and irreproachable form of exposition. Nevertheless he was not completely satisfied with his offspring. He continued to amend the first volume of *Capital* even after it had been published. He alone saw in it defects which eluded the eye of even the most trained and discriminating readers. The "demon" of doubt and dissatisfaction continued to pursue him to the end of his days, preventing him from publishing the completed second volume and from completing work on the third and fourth volumes.

His work on *Capital* was a real human and scientific feat, particularly if one takes into account the conditions in which it took place.

After emigrating to England following the suppression of the Revolution of 1848, the Marx family was without means of subsistence. Their poverty was such

that when Marx's little daughter died in 1852 there was not enough money for her burial.

Marx was forced to set aside his scientific work and look for a way to earn money. For many years he laboured without respite writing for the American *New-York Daily Tribune* (two articles a week). But even this modest income was not regular, for the editor by no means published all the articles and often shamelessly reduced the fees which were low enough in any case. Marx was therefore perfectly justified in complaining that newspaper work gave him less to eat than it did any inexperienced hack-writer.

He could only pursue his research at odd moments, and dreamed of being able to devote several months to it entirely as the peak of happiness beyond his reach.

The years passed, but poverty continued to dog Marx and his family. In 1861 Marx lost his work for the newspaper, his main source of income. Sometimes he did not go outside for weeks, because his clothes were in pawn. Putting aside his economic calculations for *Capital*, he would draw up endless lists of debts—to the baker, butcher, landlord.... The "terrible" head of the First International was often compelled to hide from his creditors whom he regarded as monsters.

Sometimes the position seemed hopeless. And even Marx, who possessed great spiritual fortitude and a remarkable capacity for seeing the humorous side of the most unfortunate situations, who used to play at home "the silent stoic in order to balance the outbreaks from the other side"¹ (that is, from his wife), even he sometimes lost patience. "In short, the devil is loose,"² he exclaimed bitterly, describing the misfortunes which had befallen his family: poverty,

¹ Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 30, S. 310-11.

² Ibid., S. 310.

debts, the sickness of his wife, his own ill health. "The roasting on a slow fire—whereby head and heart are wounded and, moreover, precious time is lost ... must end."¹ There was no end in sight, however.

Marx, a gentle, loving father, was particularly dispirited by the fact that the poverty affected his daughters: they sometimes had nothing in which to go to school. In 1862 Marx wrote to Engels: "My wife tells me every day that it would be better if she and the children were in the grave, and I really cannot blame her for it, because the humiliations, torments and horrors which have to be endured in this situation are really indescribable."²

It would be wrong, however, to paint a gloomy picture of the whole London period of Marx's life. Marx was able not only to endure life's misfortunes stoically, but also to abandon himself heart and soul to merrymaking at the slightest opportunity. In the circle of his family and friends he bore no resemblance at all to a gloomy, morose and irritable thunder-bearer as he was often portrayed by bourgeois writers.

In his mature years, as in his youth, he liked and appreciated a good joke, and humour was for him the best remedy for physical and spiritual ills. After visiting Lassalle during a journey to Germany, Marx remarks in a letter to him: "You know that I had a head full of worries, and that I have a liver complaint. But the main thing is that we laughed a great deal together. *Simia non ridet* (the monkey does not laugh.—*Ed.*), and so we have confirmed ourselves as all-perfect Buddhas."³

Even Marx's most despairing letters to Engels open

¹ Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 30, S. 314-15.

² *Ibid.*, S. 248.

³ *Ibid.*, S. 604.

with some humorous details. The whole correspondence between Marx and Engels is full of brilliant humour, with sparkling firework displays on both sides. One day, replying to philistine remarks about the "gloominess" of Marx's character, Engels wrote to Eduard Bernstein: "If these blockheads had the opportunity to read the correspondence between the Moor and me, they would lose all consciousness. Heine's poetry is child's play compared with our bold, laughing prose. The Moor could get furious, but be down in the dumps--jamais! I was convulsed with laughter, as I read the old things again."¹

The mood in the Marx family was particularly elated when news came of revolutionary events, victories of the workers, and crises in the capitalist system. As, for example, when the American crisis of 1857 broke out. Marx rejoiced, in spite of the fact that it deprived him almost completely of his only source of income, writing for the newspaper. His former capacity for work returned and he laboured with redoubled energy: in the daytime to earn his daily bread and at night to complete his political economy.

And again in 1861 when a new financial crisis broke out. "If only I were free of these wretched circumstances and could see my family unoppressed by miserable drudgery, with what rejoicing the fiasco of the December finance system, which I have so long and often predicted in the *Tribune*, would have filled me!"²

Of course, with his brilliant knowledge Marx could easily have provided his family with the comfortable life led by scholarly underlings of the bourgeois. But he thought it as despicable to turn science into a means of earning money as to falsify science. He

¹ Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 36, Berlin, 1967, S. 36.

² Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 30, S. 200.

would rather have died than take such a step.

He preferred to make an activity not connected with science into his source of income. But his attempts to obtain an income in this way were also unsuccessful. When he decided to seek employment in a railway office, he was turned down because of his bad handwriting.

In spite of all the trials and tribulations, Marx pressed on resolutely towards his aim. The remarkable thing is not that *Capital* took such a long time to write but that it was written at all in such circumstances.

It is often said that genius is patience. To say this of Marx would be an understatement. Marx had to show an iron, almost super-human will throughout many years in order to continue his scientific studies, straining himself to the very utmost and undermining his health to such an extent that all the time he felt close to the grave.

But no adversity could break this man.

With head proudly raised he followed the path chosen in his youth, the martyr's path of a Prometheus who had resolved to bring people the fire of knowledge, regardless of the harsh retribution. Like Prometheus Marx rejected all compromises offered him by the servants of the "earthly gods".

Marx himself in a letter to the German democrat Siegfried Meyer describes with remarkable force and candour the price which he had to pay for the first book of *Capital*. Meyer used to write Marx friendly letters which gave him great joy and were a real comfort throughout his "harrowing period". Marx writes that in carrying on the bitter struggle with the official world he was the least capable of underestimating it.

"Well," Marx continues, "why didn't I answer you? Because I was constantly hovering at the edge of the grave. Hence I had to make use of every mo-

ment when I was able to work to complete my book, to which I have sacrificed health, happiness, and family, I trust that I need not add anything to this explanation. I laugh at the so-called 'practical' men with their wisdom. If one chose to be an ox, one could of course turn one's back on the sufferings of mankind and look after one's own skin. But I should have really regarded myself as *impractical* if I had pegged out without completely finishing my book, at least in manuscript."¹

This confession straight from the heart makes us recall the work with which Marx began his life's path—his school-leaving essay on the choice of a profession. It was there, as we remember, that the young Marx wrote of his desire to work for mankind, to sacrifice personal well-being to the common good.

This youthful idea was not just a pretty phrase. It guided Marx's whole life. It was the leitmotif of all his works. And thirty-two years after the school essay, when he was publishing *Capital*, he could repeat with pride and satisfaction the words uttered by him in that far-off time of rosy youth:

"If we have chosen the position in life in which we can most of all work for mankind, no burdens can bow us down, because they are sacrifices for the benefit of all."

¹ Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 173.

X

Next to Genius— Another Genius

I am still "in love" with Marx and Engels, and cannot calmly stand any abuse of them. No, these were real people! We must learn from them. We must not leave that basis.

V.I. Lenin¹

At the beginning of the 1880s Western Europe was still seething with the revolutionary convulsions caused by the Paris Communards. The Russian Empire, after playing at liberalism, had entered one of the most sombre and reactionary decades of its existence. This was the time when talk began of purging the country of the "trouble-makers" and "liberals" and of restoring serfdom, when despair and hopelessness filled the hearts of the progressive Russian intelligentsia.

In those remote and barren years,
Reigned sleep and darkness in men's hearts:
And over Russia Pobedonostsev²

¹ V.I. Lenin, "To Inessa Armand, January 30, 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 35, p. 281.

² *Pobedonostsev K. P.* (1827-1907)—reactionary statesman in tsarist Russia, chief procurator of the Synod (the supreme administrative body of the Orthodox Church in Russia). Waged a resolute struggle with the revolutionary movement. A firm supporter of unlimited autocracy, opposed to science and enlightenment.

His huge owl wings did cast.
And there was neither night nor day
But only shadow of his wings so grey.

(A. Blok, *Retribution*)

It was during this period that certain European scholars maintained that the centre of the revolutionary movement was shifting to Russia and that henceforth all hopes for a new upsurge of the revolutionary movement and for socialist reconstruction were linked with that country. One of these was Frederick Engels. In March 1883 in London Engels said the following in a talk with the active Russian revolutionary and socialist Herman Lopatin: "All depends now on what is done in the immediate future in Petersburg, on which are now fixed the eyes of all thinking, far-sighted and penetrating people in the whole of Europe."

Then he expressed himself even more definitely: "Russia is the France of the present century. To her belongs rightfully and lawfully the revolutionary initiative of a new social reorganisation...."¹

His description of the last Russian tsar, Nicholas II, and the fate of his reign, was also most perspicacious:

"He is a semi-idiot, weak in mind and body, and it is this that suggests the irresolute rule of a man who will be a mere plaything in the hands of people with their conflicting intrigues, and that is necessary in order to destroy the Russian despotic system once and for all."²

Remarkable though this foresight of Engels may seem, there was nothing providential or exceptional about it, apart, of course, from Engels' exceptional and unusual personality.

¹ *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 205.

² Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 39, Berlin, 1968, S. 313.

Engels' perspicacity frequently astounded those around him. During the Revolution of 1848 the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, published by Marx, occasionally carried articles on the revolutionary war in Hungary which were attributed to one of the leaders of the Hungarian army, so rich they were in information and so accurate their forecasts of the development of military operations. These articles were actually written in Germany by a young man who had never even been to Hungary. A young man by the name of Frederick Engels.

In 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War Engels' articles attracted the attention of professional military men because in them he forecast the battle of Sedan and the defeat of the French army. From then onwards he was known in the Marx family by the half-joking nickname of "the General". Another reason for this was his military bearing which impressed his acquaintances even when he was advanced in years. Friedrich Lessner described him as follows: "Engels ... was tall and slim, his movements were quick and vigorous, his manner of speaking brief and decisive, his carriage erect, giving a soldierly touch."¹

Nevertheless, despite the profundity of his many studies, military strategy remained for him merely one of the many interests, of which his richly gifted personality was capable and which it could permit itself.

It is precisely this remarkable diversity of interests, this universality of knowledge and talent which is perhaps his most distinctive feature. The 19th century produced titans of thought and spirit in all spheres of culture. But even against this brilliant background the encyclopaedic knowledge of Engels, like that of Marx, appears unique. In this respect he may

¹ *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 174.



The young Engels

be compared with Aristotle, Leonardo da Vinci, Goethe, and Hegel. Judge for yourself: Engels was a philosopher, political economist, historian, philologist, literary critic, translator and political publicist. He may be called the founder of concrete sociological research, a brilliant example of which is his *Condition of the Working Class in England*. He had an excellent knowledge of physics, mechanics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, astronomy and a number of technical disciplines. This enabled him to sum up philosophically the whole development of the natural sciences in *Dialectics of Nature*. As for languages, Engels was a real polyglot and had a perfect knowledge of even the dialects of many languages.

"Engels stutters in twenty languages," a socialist once said jokingly, referring to Engels' slight stutter when he was excited. At the same time Engels had nothing about him of the ivory-tower scholar, the dried-up book worm. He enjoyed sport, rode and hunted. Fate also decreed that he should perform the duties of a shop-assistant, merchant, commercial traveller, industrialist and financier. There was literally no sphere of knowledge which did not interest Engels, even including works on obstetrics.

In his youth Engels began to try his hand at poetry and seriously thought of a career in literature and the arts. His pen produced some substantial poetic works which were published in the press and, in their time, attracted attention by their inexhaustible wit and satirical brilliance.

At the beginning of the 1840s Engels did his military service as a volunteer in a guards' regiment, then took part in the Baden uprising, fighting in three battles. All who saw him under fire remembered his bravery and exceptional composure.

By the end of the 1830s Frederick Engels had already heard a lot about the striking talent, indomi-

table energy and defiant Montagne spirit of his future friend. Their first meeting took place in November 1842 in Cologne, when Engels, on his way to England, visited the *Rheinische Zeitung*, the editor of which was Marx. For a number of superficial reasons no real acquaintanceship developed from that meeting. But when they met again two years later in Paris, they discovered to their delight that they had both arrived by different paths at what were basically the same views on the development of society.

Once having crossed, their paths ran side by side right up to Marx's death. Marxism, although it bears the name of one man, is actually the inseparable work of two. Marx himself once introduced Engels as his "*alter ego*".

Lenin once remarked that the relations between Marx and Engels surpassed the most moving tales of the ancients about human friendship. He evidently had in mind, in particular, the delightful legend of Castor and Pollux. Pollux was the son of Zeus and Leda and, unlike his bosom friend Castor, was immortal. They were unlike each other and possessed different talents. Whereas Castor could drive a chariot brilliantly, Pollux was an unsurpassed fighter. Together they were invincible and frequently turned the foe to flight. They were both called by the same name, the Dioscuri.

But one day Castor fell in battle. Pollux was inconsolable. He went to Zeus and begged his father to take away his immortality and let him join his friend in the realm of shadows—Hades. The wise Zeus solved the problem in a different way. He divided immortality equally between the friends, so that each of them had to spend half the time in Hades and the other half in Olympus.

The gods were moved and delighted by such selfless friendship and lifted Castor and Pollux into the

heavens where they shine in the Gemini constellation. A morning star and an evening star: one goes down into the darkness—Hades, and the other rises above Olympus.

Like the Dioscuri, Marx and Engels were not alike in cast of mind and character, but this is precisely why they complemented each other so well.

People usually quote Engels' words that he always played "second fiddle" to Marx. And this really was the case. But one must also bear in mind the testimony of Marx, who once admitted in a letter to his friend: "You know that everything 1. comes late with me, and 2. I always follow in your footsteps."¹

In spite of all his exceptional talents, Engels could not compare with Marx, of course, in creative power of intellect, soundness and depth of ever-questing research, in superb dialectical elegance of style, and aphoristic accuracy of generalisations. But in certain respects Engels had the advantage: he found it easier to grasp and reshape the new, did not get bogged down for a long time in the study of a single subject, and synthesised more freely material from the most diverse spheres of science and culture.

To quote the apt comparison of the eminent Soviet student of Engels, M. Serebryakov, the lightly armed warrior Engels moved more quickly, manoeuvred more freely, and attacked the enemy fortresses earlier. This became obvious in the very first stages of the spiritual development of the founders of scientific communism.

In spite of the fact that he was two years younger than Marx, Engels began to publish in the press earlier, at first as a poet, then as a publicist. He was quicker to oppose the existing social order and became a revolutionary democrat and republican before

¹ Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 30, S. 418.

Marx. He was the first of the two to turn to utopian socialism and communism in its form at that time, the first to make a critique of political economy. It was in Engels' "footsteps" that Marx became interested in the achievements of the natural sciences.

The fact remains, however, that where Engels left brilliant sketches, Marx left epoch-making works. Each had his own style, his own distinctive talents, his own circle of scientific interests. But this merely increased their attraction for each other. Marx considered Engels to be a real encyclopaedia and admired his ability to work at any hour of the day or night, the fact that he wrote quickly and was "devilishly" sharp.

With regard to their studies of political economy, this deserves to be discussed in more detail. In 1844 an article by Engels entitled "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy" was published in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher*. Its author was only twenty-four years old. But it raised fundamental questions of the life of modern society so boldly and strikingly, and delivered such a thorough criticism of the dogmas of classical political economy, which no one had ever doubted before, that Engels immediately became an acknowledged authority in this sphere. The article contained a number of fundamentally new ideas, which Marx later developed in *Capital*. It was, in fact, the first economic essay of scientific socialism. And Marx himself frequently refers to it in *Capital*.

A year later Engels published his book *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. It contained a vast amount of factual material on the basis of which the author not only concluded that the proletariat was the suffering class but also substantiated its revolutionary role in society. Many years later in a letter to Engels Marx wrote of how freshly and passionately this work was written; he admired its bold foresight,

the absence in it of any academic or scientific doubts.

Lenin also regarded Engels' book very highly. He considered that "neither before 1845 nor after has there appeared so striking and truthful a picture of the misery of the working class".¹

The next large work by the researcher who had made such a brilliant debut appeared in 1878. The interval between these two books by Engels was thirty-three years. True, these years were not a period of total literary silence. Engels published numerous articles in newspapers and brochures, but was unfortunately unable to undertake a large work. This is, perhaps, one of the most tragic aspects of his biography.

At the end of 1849, after the revolutionary events in Germany in which Marx and Engels played a most active and direct part, they both emigrated to England. Wishing to help Marx and his family, who were now almost completely lacking in means of subsistence, Engels settled in Manchester and worked as a clerk in the office of a cotton mill, where his father was a partner. To this "commercial slavery" he sacrificed twenty years! And all this time Marx and Engels carried on a lively correspondence, and in almost every letter Engels, who was by no means living in luxury himself, announced that he had sent off a cheque for a small sum. Franz Mehring rightly remarks that offering and accepting such a sacrifice required an equally noble spirit. It was not merely a question of material assistance.

When Marx was asked to write articles for the *New-York Daily Tribune* Engels translated these articles into English because his friend was not yet completely fluent in the language.

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Frederick Engels", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 23.

Marx discussed with Engels all the difficult problems which arose in the course of his work on *Capital*. Moreover, Engels' opinion was extremely important for Marx. Without consulting his friend Marx did not take a single practical step or publish a single work in the London period of his life.

Their friendship, which grew out of their creative collaboration in the work on *The Holy Family* and *The German Ideology* and was reinforced by their revolutionary activity, grew stronger with the years. Their spiritual community was so strong that they could not do without each other.

For all his easily-wounded self-esteem Marx was more hurt by criticism of Engels than by criticism of himself. He could endure vicious attacks on himself by mercenary quill-drivers with a philosophical calm, not deigning to reply. But if it was a matter of Engels' honour, one could expect neither indulgence nor mercy from Marx. He would rush straight into battle. When in 1850, a certain Müller-Telling dared to write a letter slandering Engels to the Arbeiterverein Marx fairly exploded. With restrained fury he lashed the wretched slanderer in the following lines:

"I would challenge you to a duel for your letter of yesterday to the Arbeiterverein, if you were still capable of giving satisfaction after your dishonourable slander of Engels.... I await an encounter with you on a different field, in order to tear off the hypocritical mask of revolutionary fanaticism under which you have so far succeeded in concealing your petty interests, your envy, your dissatisfied vanity and your discontented anger that the world does not recognise your great genius...."¹

And Engels reacted likewise, when it was a question of defending his friend's honour. He delivered an

¹ Marx, Engels, *Werke*. Bd. 27, Berlin, 1965, S. 526.

angry reproof to Achille Loria, a vulgar economist who specialised in falsifying and distorting the ideas of *Capital*: "I have received your article on Karl Marx. You are at liberty to subject his teaching to your sharpest criticism and even to misunderstand it; you are at liberty to stretch a biography of Marx which is a piece of sheer phantasy. But what you are not at liberty to do and what I shall never permit anyone to do, is to slander the character of my deceased friend."¹

When Engels went to London and the friends met in person, there was real rejoicing in the Marx household. Marx's daughters called him their second father. It is hard to say what would have happened to Marx and his family if it had not been for Engels' many years of selfless assistance. He consciously set aside his own scientific interests, sacrificing them to the scientific studies of his friend. This always lay heavily on Marx's heart.

One August 16, 1867 at two o'clock in the morning Marx finished the proofs of the first volume of *Capital* and wrote to Engels: "So *this volume is finished*. It was thanks to *you* alone that this became possible. Without your self-sacrifice for me I could never possibly have done the enormous work for the three volumes. I embrace you, full of thanks."²

Engels never complained or lamented his fate, however. He was as cheerful and composed at his work as though there were nothing in the world like "going to the shop" or sitting in the office.

What this really meant for Engels can be seen from the following touch from the memoirs of Eleanor Marx-Aveling who was a visitor at Engels' house when his "hard labour" was coming to an end.

"I shall never forget the triumph with which he

¹ Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 36, S. 19.

² Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 180.



Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and Marx's daughters—
Jenny, Laura, Eleanor

Your idea of happiness Chateau Margaux
 1848
 (An allusion to the revolutionary events of that year)
 Your idea of misery to go to a dentist
 The vice you excuse excess of any sort
 The vice you detest cant
 Your aversion affected stuck-up
 women
 Favourite occupation chaffing and being
 chaffed
 Favourite hero none
 Favourite heroine too many to name
 one
 Favourite flower Blue Bell
 Favourite colour any one not aniline
 Favourite dish cold: salad, hot:
 Irish stew
 Favourite maxim not to have any
 Favourite motto take it easy."¹

Engels, like Marx, possessed an extraordinarily developed sense of humour. This helped him to endure the burdens of life in exile.

In a letter to Engels, describing his sufferings from ill health, Marx remarked that, for all these circumstances, he felt more than ever before what a great happiness such a friendship as theirs was, and that he did not value any other relationships so highly.

After casting off the hated yoke of commerce, Engels moved to London and settled down not far from Marx's house. The friends met almost daily. Engels was now working very hard, realising all the creative plans which had accumulated, the main one being the grandiose task of making a dialectical synthesis of the achievements of the natural sciences.

Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd 32, S. 695.

In 1878 his *Anti-Dühring* was published which, to quote Lenin, analyses "highly important problems in the domain of philosophy, natural science and the social sciences".¹ He also studied the history of primitive society, working on the book *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, which came out in 1884.

Apart from his purely scientific studies, Engels applied himself most energetically to party organising work. He was elected to the General Council of the International, where he was entrusted with the duties of corresponding secretary for a number of countries.

Engels always sought to adapt his scientific interests to the practical aims of revolutionary struggle. Thus, foreseeing the future, he began to study Slavonic languages.

Marx and Engels were able to see for themselves the success of the working-class movement. They celebrated each victory as a personal triumph. Even in his declining years Engels organised real festivities at home on the occasion of the parliamentary elections in Germany. Edward Aveling recalls that he bought a huge cask of special German beer, laid on a special supper (Engels was a "great cook"), and invited his closest friends. The "General" opened each telegram and read its contents aloud: "If it was victory (for the Social-Democrats at the elections—*Author*) we drank, and if it was defeat we drank."²

After Marx's death in 1883 Engels became the acknowledged head of the international working-class movement. He conducted the orchestra, but he was just as modest, unpretentious and unaffected as before. One day he was to say of himself: "Fate has so willed it that I, as survivor, reaped the honours which

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Frederick Engels", *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 25.

² *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels*, p. 316.

are due to the work of my deceased contemporaries and above all to that of Marx"¹ and to promise solemnly to spend the rest of his life in active service of the proletariat so as to become, in the future at least, as worthy as possible of the honours rendered.

In the last years of their life Marx and Engels turned their attention to Russia. Engels corresponded with many eminent Russian socialists: Plekhanov, Zasulich, Lopatin and others.

In his talks with Russian revolutionaries Engels insisted that they should not just quote Marx's works but try to think as Marx would have thought in their place. He believed that only in this case the word "Marxist" had the right to exist. Engels was convinced that the coming revolution in Russia would play a great part in the fate of the world communist movement as a whole. And he was not mistaken.

Sure of the correctness of his chosen path and of the great future of the cause to which he and Marx had devoted all their energies, Engels was fully justified in his boundless love of life. And, in spite of all the burdens, Engels' life was as integrated and splendid as the man himself.

After the death of Marx the completion of the second and third volumes of *Capital* became Engels' main preoccupation. Setting aside his own manuscript, *The Dialectics of Nature* which was never to be completed, Engels began work on his friend's manuscript. He finished this great task only a few months before his own death, but executed it with the assiduity, scrupulousness and perfection which had always distinguished his work.

Thus, the publication of *Capital* is the achievement of two geniuses. Mankind had never known a

¹ Marx, Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 37, Berlin, 1967, S. 513.

work of such spiritual power, which had such a great influence on the whole of its subsequent destiny.

* * *

Now that we know how and in what conditions *Capital* was written, let us turn to this most remarkable book. Leaving aside the purely economic problems, let us try to look at it as a work which gave the fullest embodiment to the new, genuinely scientific world outlook, the philosophy of dialectical and historical materialism.

XI

The Philosophy of *Capital*

If Marx did not leave behind him a "*Logic*" (with a capital letter), he did leave the *Logic of Capital*.... In *Capital*, Marx applied to a single science logic, dialectics and the theory of knowledge of materialism [three words are not needed: it is one and the same thing] which has taken everything valuable in Hegel and developed it further."

V. I. Lenin¹

The "philosophy of *Capital*" may seem a strange combination of words to many. We know that *Capital* is an analysis of the economic relations of bourgeois society. Some Western Marxologists deny that there is any philosophy in *Capital* and that Marx was a philosopher at all. According to them a philosopher is a person who writes special philosophical works expounding his own system of ideas.

Marx did not write such books. Nowhere does he expound a philosophical "doctrine". Yet nevertheless he remains the greatest philosopher of all time. Marx's philosophy, dialectical and historical materialism, is expounded in all the works which he wrote. In reply to the question as to which book of Marx one should read to become acquainted with it, the answer must be: read his main life's work—*Capital*.

¹ V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 319.

This was Lenin's reply at the end of the last century to the Russian liberal public figure and sociologist N. Mikhailovsky. Mikhailovsky in one of his polemic articles against Marxism asked the rhetorical question: "In which of his works did Marx expound his materialist conception of history?" To which he replied immediately with the aplomb of the discoverer that there was no such work by Marx nor was there any such work in the whole of Marxist literature.

"In which of his works did Marx not expound his materialist conception of history?" Lenin rightly objected. And showed that bourgeois thinkers did not see a philosophical theory of social development in Marx because Marx created something fundamentally different from all preceding sociology, i.e., all teachings and theories about society.¹

In bourgeois intellectual circles of that time the respectable, venerable sociologist was a person who discussed such "serious matters" as, for example, what society is in general, what are its aim and essence, what a society in keeping with "human nature" should be like. These sociologists may even have appeared almost as revolutionaries, earning themselves moral authority with the enlightened public by expressing sincere indignation at the fact that the existing order was abnormal and did not correspond to "human nature" and the principles of justice.

Pre-Marxian sociologists, who were unable to delve deeply into social processes and looked upon them in the light of events of the moment, thought that the social world was governed by the decisions of kings and emperors, that the course of events depend-

¹ V.I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats". *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 143.

ed entirely on their will and on the ideas of thinkers who influenced public opinion. Given this view history appears as a chaotic jumble of events, processes and facts which depend on the struggle of passions of strong personalities, a jumble in which one cannot distinguish important phenomena from unimportant, more significant from less significant, in which one cannot see any laws, understand the mechanisms behind social development or how they can be influenced.

All this was subjectivism, idealism in sociology. Whereas idealism in views on nature from the moment of its inception in Greek philosophy had serious opponents, the materialists, idealism in views on society reigned supreme right up to Marx.

Marx was the first to apply the idea of materialism to the development of society. And this, to quote Lenin, was in itself a stroke of genius.

Marx saw the clash of passions, ideas and interests not as the cause, but as the result, the consequence of some more profound cause independent of human consciousness. This or that idea or motive of any human being is itself conditioned by his social existence, his position in society. Ideas can influence the development of society if they encounter mature social needs, if they express the interests, first and foremost, the material interests, of the majority of society, if they take possession of the masses.

Why, for example, did the French monarchy collapse at the end of the 18th century? Not, of course, because Louis XVI made this or that political mistake (although this too is significant), but because absolute power and feudal social relations were hindering the development of the country's trade and industry, and had become an obstacle to the development of capitalism and the rising class of the bourgeoisie, which

already possessed economic power, but not political power.

Social relations, which develop independently of human consciousness, determine in the last analysis the prevailing ideological, political and juridical systems. The course of ideas depends, generally speaking, on the course of socio-economic processes, and not the reverse. This means that social relations themselves are material, objective! This is the conclusion which thinkers before Marx had failed to reach.

Social relations are most diverse, however. The most important among them are those which arise in the process of production, i.e., production relations. How do they manifest themselves? They are, first and foremost, the relations of the producer and the owner of the means of production, i.e., the slave and the slave-owner, the serf and the feudal lord, the worker and the capitalist.

It is easy to see the fundamental difference between these three forms of exploitative relations. So we are dealing with the three corresponding socio-economic formations which developed naturally one into the other as a consequence of the growth of productive forces.

Marx saw the development of society as a *natural historical process* subject to laws which are independent of human consciousness but fully cognisable.

All these ideas were expressed by the founders of Marxism as early as the 1840s and 1850s. But, to quote Lenin, before the creation of *Capital* this was only a hypothesis, although a scientifically substantiated one. "Since the appearance of *Capital*—the materialist conception of history is no longer a hypothesis, but a scientifically proven proposition",¹ and

¹ V.I. Lenin, "What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats", *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 142.

sociology has become a science.

Why did *Capital* play such an important role in the formation and establishment of historical materialism? Because Marx did not confine himself to speculative general discussions of how society is organised, but studied in detail the mechanism of its functioning and development using the example of the capitalist formation. As a result the reader sees the whole of this formation as a living thing, with the complex dialectics of its productive forces and production relations, with the antagonism of the classes of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, with the political, juridical and ideological institutions which protect the right of the entrepreneur to exploit the worker.

With inexorable logic Marx proved that just as feudalism necessarily gave way to capitalism, the latter by virtue of the objective laws of development is moving towards its own destruction, towards a classless society. "The monopoly of capital becomes a fetter upon the mode of production, which has sprung up and flourished along with, and under it. Centralisation of the means of production and socialisation of labour at last reach a point where they become incompatible with their capitalist integument. This integument is burst asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated."¹

Marx demonstrates convincingly that communist society is not the ideal of utopian dreamers, but that the whole course of economic life is directed towards it. Capital itself, by unrestrainedly accelerating the development of science and technology, of all productive forces, prepares the material prerequisites of a new society, a new socio-economic formation. By uniting the proletariat in large factories and turning the vast majority of the population into hired exploit-

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1974, p. 715.

ed labourers, capital is preparing a revolutionary force capable of shattering the fetters of the old society and beginning its reorganisation.

Communism is a society where the workers themselves are the owners of all material and spiritual wealth, where man becomes the highest value and aim, and not a means of social production, where the free, all-sided development of each is a condition of the free development of all. Marx sketched the outlines of this society without a hint of utopianism, without the slightest attempt to draw arbitrary, idyllic pictures of a future "Golden Age". With the force of logical analysis he reveals the tendencies and laws which make communism historically inevitable, and shows the real way to the new society—through the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the working class. Thus, in the process of a painstaking economic analysis of capitalist production Marx produces the materialist conception of history. Likewise *Capital* embodies the dialectico-materialist method, the very core of Marxist philosophy.

The dialectico-materialist method is not described in special terms, it is given *in action*, in practical application to an analysis of the economy of capitalist society. Analysing *Capital* we see how Marx used this method, how he applied it. Consequently, the readers of *Capital* also learn how one can and must apply the dialectico-materialist method in the study of society, how one can master this powerful instrument of theoretical thought.

The dialectical method of cognition was developed by many philosophers long before Marx. The very term "dialectics" was born in Ancient Greece and meant the art of conducting a dispute, or dialogue, the art of manoeuvring your fellow-conversationalist into an impasse, of making him finally state something which was the direct opposite of what he

had asserted at the beginning. With time the term "dialectics" acquired a somewhat different sense. It began to mean the fluidity, the contradictory character of the actual processes of nature, society and thought, and the development from the simple to the complex by means of the unity and clash of opposites. The first Greek philosophers, Heraclitus, Anaxagoras, Parmenides, Zeno, Democritus, Socrates, and Plato, were skilled dialecticians. It was they who turned dialectics into a consciously applied method of thinking, of cognising the world around. Their perspicacious philosophical ideas have not lost their importance, their relevance to this day. The Ancient Greek philosophers give an integrated picture of the universe, intuitively grasping the most important and universal causal relations. They do not delve deep into the world of detail—and herein lies the defect of Ancient Greek philosophy because of which it had to give way later to other views. But, as Engels stressed, herein also lies its superiority to certain limited conceptions which the natural sciences have not overcome entirely to this very day. Greek philosophy bequeathed to us a developed, dialectically flexible system of concepts and categories which is still used successfully to explain and interpret the world. Its representatives formulated many bold, perspicacious hypotheses, which were subsequently proved scientifically, by experiment. Max Born, one of the greatest modern physicists, rightly remarked that: "Much of what physics is thinking was foreseen by philosophy."¹

Alongside that of Ancient Greece Engels pointed to another form of pre-Marxian dialectics which was fruitful for natural science—the dialectics of classical German philosophy which reached its peak in the phi-

¹ M. Born, *Physik und Politic*, Göttingen, 1960, S. 42.

losophy of Hegel.

Hegel created an original system of concepts which develop one out of the other, clash with one another and, according to him, give birth in this development and struggle to all the phenomena of nature, society and thought. He turns reality upside down, as it were, and believes that ideas, concepts and logical categories do not reflect the world, but create it. As a result Hegel regarded his philosophy almost as the crown of creation, for it attains ultimate, absolute truth.

Yet in spite of its idealism and limitations, Hegelian philosophy was an immense step forward in the interpretation of the world.

Hegel's great merit is that he made an impressive attempt to sum up all the achievements of the human spirit—in philosophy, art, and natural science. He represented the whole natural, historical and spiritual world in the form of constant change, transformation and development. Nature, society and thought turned out to be imbued with the same dialectical principles. Never in the history of human thought had such a majestic, all-embracing system been created.

But Hegel's greatest achievement was his revelation of the course and mechanism of development of all that exists from the simple to the complex, from the part to the whole, which he called the method of ascendancy from the abstract to the concrete and which embodied all the aspects, laws and elements of his dialectics. With the help of the Hegelian method of ascendancy from the abstract to the concrete the object was reproduced not only as interacting, but also as historically developing, growing and progressing. The "pure" deduction of categories out of one another in Hegel runs remarkably parallel, as it were, to the development of world history. And although the real state of affairs is mystically inverted with the

result that the creation of the thinking whole is in Hegel an act of creation of real history, nevertheless this very mode of thought contained the prerequisite for the materialist conception of history, the scientific approach to the study of social processes and phenomena, and their theoretical modelling.

What followed from this? It would appear that all one needed to do was to master this method and equip oneself with it in order to acquire a powerful instrument of knowledge which would help one solve the most complex theoretical problems of science in all its concrete spheres. Would it not?

But strangely enough the greatest achievement of Hegelian philosophy—dialectics—remained idle, without any application whatsoever both during the philosopher's lifetime and for a long time after his death. No one even attempted to apply the Hegelian dialectical method. It was not subjected to criticism, but was simply forgotten: the Hegelian "diadochi" (Engels' ironical name for the official representatives of the Hegelian school in German universities), like the successors of Alexander the Great, squabbled among themselves without the slightest idea of what to do with the magnificent heritage which had been handed down to them.

Why was this so? The reason would appear to lie mainly in the imperfection of the method itself. It was not viable in the form in which it had been left to posterity. It had been cultivated in the artificial, unreal environment of metaphysical abstractions and was fitted only for the needs of the idealist philosophical system which had completed its development in itself.

Once Hegel placed the world upside down in his philosophy, it could only stand in this delicate position, not move forward. The dialectical method could not develop on such a shaky foundation.

In presenting the Hegelian system of absolute idealism philosophy had already achieved everything that had to be done. It had already cognised everything which it was capable of cognising. It had said everything that it had to say. Absolute truth had been attained.

The earth could stop revolving round the Sun. The stars could stop shining. Mankind could abandon wars and revolutions, passions and interests, and stand entranced in perpetual admiration of the feats of daring German thought. There was nowhere else to go. Nothing else to find out. Hegelian philosophy was the crown and aim of the whole historical movement of nature, society and thought.

The question of applying the dialectical method in other fields of knowledge sounded blasphemous to orthodox Hegelians.

It was not simply a question of discarding the idealist integument. Idealism was not simply something external for the dialectics cultivated in its bosom. It had left its mark of Cain on dialectics and dialectics suffered from its ailments, its feebleness.

As has already been stated, dialectics was rudely flouted by the claim of Hegelian philosophy to absolute, final truth. Its rights were limited to the field of thought alone. With regard to nature and society, at best only a hint of dialectics was permitted, to about the same extent that it appeared in the achievements of the individual natural sciences of that time.

This had its own logic. If matter was only the *Andersein* of cognition (the cognition of matter at the beginning of the 19th century had not yet advanced as far as dialectics), this meant that matter was fundamentally alien to developed dialectics, and there was no point in looking for dialectics there. Hence the path to further theoretical searching was closed, practically speaking, and thought became

complacent, resting on its laurels. Beyond the limits of Hegel's philosophical system there was nothing for dialectics to do, it had lost all potential.

In the sphere of "pure thought", too, Hegel's idealism affected his dialectical method. The triads of his categories were frequently of an arbitrary nature which did not correspond to the true logic and content of concepts. For the sake of a set scheme far-fetched transitions from one period to another abounded together with empty verbal exercises and contrivances which smacked strongly of scholasticism and mysticism. Hegel was not averse to acting in keeping with Mephistopheles' malicious remark:

For just where fails the comprehension,
A word steps promptly in as deputy.¹

But if, nevertheless, Hegel achieved great things in the sphere of pure thought, putting an end almost playfully to the whole of previous logic and metaphysics, if he revealed, albeit in idealist form, the development and inner connection of world history, and left a whole epoch in all the fields of knowledge which he touched,—this must mean that the richest, as yet untapped possibilities lay in his dialectical method.

This must mean that it required a person who was capable of drawing the sword of dialectics from the scabbard of the system, cleaning it of the rust of idealism, reforging it so that it could not only plunge into the incorporeal shadows of concepts, but also become a weapon for the cognition of material reality, of the most complex social and natural processes. That person was Karl Marx.

Engels, who himself had travelled the path from

¹ J.W. Goethe, *Faust*, Vol. 1, The First Part, Boston and New York, 1870, p. 80.

Hegelianism to Marxism, was fully justified in stating that: "Marx was, and is, the only one who could undertake the work of extracting from the Hegelian logic the kernel which comprises Hegel's real discoveries in this sphere, and reconstructing the dialectical method, divested of its idealistic trappings, in the simple shape in which it becomes the only true form of development of thought. The working out of the method which forms the foundation of Marx's criticism of political economy we consider a result of hardly less importance than the basic materialist outlook itself."¹

What did applying the dialectical method in concrete scientific research mean? Taking ready-made, set dialectical forms and putting the empirical content of the individual sciences into them? Tracing all the knots and peripeteia of the ascendancy from the abstract to the concrete in Hegel, and then expounding the material of physics, chemistry, biology, sociology and political economy in strict correspondence with this? Mastering the terminology, categories and concepts of Hegel's *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* and trying to make the phenomena and laws of the reality under study speak this language? Learning the laws and features of dialectics and searching for more and more new illustrations and confirmation of them in the sphere of the natural sciences?

Is this not the source of the naive belief, which remains to this day, that a scientist need only study treatises on dialectics and this will inspire him to make brilliant discoveries in concrete spheres of science?

¹ Frederick Engels. "Karl Marx, *The Critique of Political Economy*". Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 1, Moscow, 1976, p. 513.



Karl Marx during his visit to Holland
Drawing by F. Glebov

Marx approached the problem of the use of the dialectical method in economic research quite differently. He refused to *foist* dialectical forms on reality. He did not try to fit reality into ready-made dialectical schemes, as Hegel did, but made an unbiased study of the economic processes themselves in their emergence and progression, in their tendencies, revealing the inner logic of the progression of the economic organism through the development of contradictions and their transition into their own opposite, that is, the dialectics of the actual object of study. This is why Marx said that his method was the complete opposite of the Hegelian one.

His ultimate aim was, as Marx put it, to discover the economic law of the progression of capitalist society. But what concrete society is portrayed in *Capital*? It is not Germany, not France, and not even England (although Marx refers to England most of all). It is capitalism in its, so to say, pure form. It is a theoretical model of the capitalist economy, which appears not as something dead and immutable, but as "an organism capable of change, and [which] is constantly changing".¹

How could this organism be represented in concepts? How could its unusual complexity and multi-sidedness be expressed in thought? How could the inner causality of the aspects, i.e., the structure, be understood not only in the process of functioning, but in its historical development? How could the connection be established between what appears as the surface of capitalist relations open for all to see, and what constitutes their concealed essence? How could the whole fanciful construction of the capitalist economy be reflected in the system of categories?

Marx solved this unprecedentedly difficult task

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 21.

with the help of the dialectico-materialist method of the ascendancy from the abstract to the concrete, which, although it originated directly from Hegel's method, is as different from the latter as, for example, the natural-historical process of the evolution of living forms culminating in man is from the mystical, alchemistic creation of Homunculus in a glass retort described in Goethe's *Faust*.

Like Hegel before him, Marx was faced with the question of where to start his theoretical reproduction of the system of the capitalist economy. A great deal depended on the answer, for a false initial premise leads to false conclusions, a firm edifice of theory cannot be erected on a shaky foundation.

It would appear most natural to begin political economy with something real and concrete, for example, the population, the nation, the state. This was what 18th-century economists did.

The state is a complex concept, however. One cannot understand it without a knowledge of what comprises the state mechanism, how it works, what political and economic factors determine its activity.

If one were to begin with the state, the population, it would be a most vague, chaotic picture of the whole, and only by way of more detailed definitions could one reach an understanding of the different individual aspects of these concepts. Consequently one would have to retrace one's footsteps and go back to the population, the state, but this time not as a chaotic picture, but as a rich sum of numerous definitions and relations.

Therefore one should begin with an individual, elementary, abstract concept. But which one? Where is the initial cell, the embryo from which the whole integrated organism of capitalist production develops naturally.

Marx concentrates his attention on the com-

modity. The opening paragraph of *Capital* reads as follows: "The wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as 'an immense accumulation of commodities', its unit being a single commodity. Our investigation must therefore begin with the analysis of a commodity."¹

Marx begins *Capital* with the elementary life of the economy—with the commodity, commodity exchange. And this is no figment of the imagination, it is something which is perceived by the senses, something material, which concerns everyone every day, which permeates the whole organism of the economy in all its parts and details, which constitutes its historical point of departure.

At the same time commodity exchange is "the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday *relation* of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times".² It is an abstraction, but an abstraction engendered by the very material existence of capitalism both during its emergence and in its developed form. Unlike Hegel's abstractions it is not the result of the activity of thinking in itself. It is given materially, as an aspect of a materially existing system, and therefore can and should obtain a corresponding place in the theoretical model of this system.

What is the commodity exchange? On what is it based? On the contradiction of use and exchange value. Marx examines the struggle of these opposites and the resultant contradiction of abstract and concrete labour and arrives at the more complex concept of the universal form of value, and hence at monetary form. His thought progresses not in accordance with

¹ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 43.

² V.I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics". *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 358.

set laws, but in accordance with the logic, the dialectics of the subject being studied. And precisely because of this it arrives at positive results.

Describing Marx's method in *Capital*, Engels writes: "Anyone who would like to have a striking illustration of the fact that the German dialectical method in its present state of elaboration is at least as superior to the old, shallow, garrulous metaphysical method as the railway is to the means of transport of the Middle Ages, should read in Adam Smith or any other official economist of reputation what a torment exchange value and use value were to these gentlemen, how difficult it was for them to keep them properly apart and comprehend each in its peculiar definiteness, and should then compare the clear and simple exposition in Marx."¹

From concept to concept, from category to category in strict accordance with the structure of capitalist production, the harmonious edifice of Marx's theory is erected. Each successive category here is necessarily concluded from the preceding one, becoming enriched with new content and embracing an increasingly broad circle of phenomena, that is, becoming concrete. The analysis of the initial contradiction inherent in commodity exchange leads to the revelation of the developed contradictions of capitalist society in their concrete manifestation, and, consequently, also to the revolutionary conclusion on the inevitable negation of this society.

The proletariat acquires a powerful theoretical weapon in the struggle with the bourgeoisie. Science is enriched with the dialectico-materialist method of ascendancy from the abstract to the concrete.

¹ Frederick Engels, "Karl Marx, *The Critique of Political Economy*". Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 1, p. 515.

The dialectical method still has to show what it is capable of in scientific cognition. The natural sciences feel a compelling need to generalise, to put the accumulated material in order, to process it dialectically, to integrate the uncoordinated achievements of the sciences on the different flanks with the help of a new conceptual and methodological apparatus.

This is where natural science enters the higher spheres of theoretical thought. It is inevitably faced with the task of organising all the results achieved into a definite system, of expounding them within the framework of a single theory. We already find such a task on the agenda of modern physics, biology and ecology. There is no other way of solving it apart from the method of ascendancy from the abstract to the concrete.

The dialectico-materialist method is a powerful weapon in the hands of the researcher. It helps him to choose a correct pathfinder, not to lose his bearings, not to stray into an impasse. It helps him to see the problem in places where experiment and mathematical analysis cannot yet discover it. Yet all this is subject to the condition that the researcher does not simply know the philosophical tenets, but has mastered this method to perfection.

Marxist-Leninist philosophy is called upon to elaborate methods of creative, questing, unformalised thinking which takes place on the highest level of generalisations. It is called upon to discover new means of the progression of theoretical thought, new forms of thinking which correspond to an increasingly profound penetration of the essential and universal relations of the universe. Materialist dialectics, like Marxism as a whole, is, to quote Lenin, "*not a lifeless dogma ... but a living guide to action*".

* * *

Of course, all the foregoing about the philosophy of *Capital* is only a very sketchy outline. My aim in providing it was merely to show that here lies a most exciting and interesting field of intellectual activity. Here are fathomless depths in which it is well worth immersing oneself. The deeper we delve into them the more they enrich us spiritually. To quote a Latin saying which Marx himself was fond of using: *hic Rhodus, hic salta*.

Conclusion

His name will endure through the
ages, and so also will his work!

Frederick Engels¹

When the heart of Karl Marx stopped beating—he died on March 14, 1883, a year after his wife—Frederick Engels said: “Mankind is shorter by a head, and that the greatest head of our time.”²

Marx’s death was an irreplaceable loss. His cause, his ideas were for mankind a great acquisition, the importance of which it is difficult to overestimate.

In the whole history of human culture there was no phenomenon comparable in any degree to Marxism. Former philosophers had created theories which remained the property of a narrow circle of the “initiated”. These theories claimed either to explain individual aspects of reality, or to be an ideal construction of the world.

They created systems which, according to their fanatical conviction, were supposed to explain all that

¹ Frederick Engels, “Speech at the Graveside of Karl Marx”. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1976, p. 163.

² Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 340.

existed once and for all. They proclaimed absolute doctrines of interpreting the world and demanded unconditional acceptance of them. No matter what different shades the speculative constructions of the various philosophers assumed, they were all united by one thing: the lack of historicity in their thinking, their doctrinaire approach.

The tragedy of these thinkers was that their theories simply could not keep pace with reality. Life, obedient to the hidden dialectical laws, advanced inexorably, while the doctrines which were supposed to conquer the world grew hopelessly obsolete almost as soon as they appeared.

"Gray, my dear friend, is every theory,
And green alone life's golden tree! "

(Goethe, *Faust*.)

This aphorism of Goethe's lost its categorical nature, however, when a theory appeared which reflected not the facts of reality in themselves, not this or that transient phenomenon of reality, but the actual development of reality, its perpetual and constant movement and change. All the blinkers were torn off, all the prejudices of dogmatic thought were cast down—for the first time the world was represented in a theory exactly as it is: in all the complexity and contradictoriness of perpetual development in space and time. In this conception human society appears as the crown of development of nature and progresses in accordance with definite and cognisable natural laws.

If one were to try and define briefly the essence of the Marxist world outlook from the point of view of its methodology of cognising reality, it would be its consistent anti-dogmatism and consistent historicism.

People who do not understand this essence of Marxism are usually surprised that Marx and Engels

did not leave works in which the system of their views on nature, society and thought is fully expounded, that they did not leave a "catechism of Marxism". In an attempt to fill in this "gap", some of them have endeavoured to produce such "catechisms", but of course all that resulted from this venture was the vulgarisation of Marxism. For Marxism is not a collection of ready-made answers for all contingencies, not a theoretical model of the universe, and not a "universally compulsory" historical scheme. Marxism is a method of cognising that which exists in its constant progression and change, it is a programme of revolutionary reorganisation of social relations and a weapon of struggle for this reorganisation.

Even before Marx the human genius had provided a scientific interpretation of many phenomena and laws of nature, but in the field of social relations the thinkers of the past were wandering in the dark. Marxism rejected empty claims to provide a final explanation of all social phenomena, but it provided a reliable and correct key to the study of them. Consequently the study of society was put on a strictly scientific basis for the first time.

The history of mankind had abounded in revolutionary upheavals, but before Marx it did not have a truly revolutionary world outlook. Now, however, the revolutionary movement of the masses and revolutionary thought were united. Marxism became the "locomotive" of history, accelerating its course.

One cannot help marvelling at the speed with which Marxist ideas spread. When the *Communist Manifesto* was written, the Communist League consisted of only a few dozen people. In 1864 the International Working Men's Association arose, the first mass, militant organisation of the world proletariat. Communism began to turn into an international movement of the working class. And in 1871 the prole-

tariat of France made the first heroic attempt to put communist ideas into practice—by means of a revolutionary struggle for power and the organisation of the Paris Commune which existed for three months.

Generalising the experience of the Paris Commune, the child of the First International, Marx saw it as a new type of state, a dictatorship of the proletariat, the only political form in which the economic emancipation of labour could begin. Marx stressed that it was the duty of the proletarian state to bring about true democracy. He welcomed the fact that the Commune was eradicating the very spirit of bureaucracy, had placed the activities of all state organisations under the control of the masses, and was seeking to base its activities on the broad masses of the working people.

As has already been said, towards the end of their life Marx and Engels turned their attention increasingly to Russia, which had become the centre of the world revolutionary movement. Russia was the first country to translate Marx's *Capital*. It was also to be the first country of the victorious proletariat.

Marx wrote to Sorge that the new turning point in the history of Europe would be linked with the events in Russia. "Russia—and I have studied conditions there from the original *Russian* sources, unofficial and official (the latter accessible only to very few persons, but obtained for me through friends in Petersburg)—has long been standing on the threshold of an upheaval; all the elements of it are prepared."¹

Remarking that all sections of Russian official society were economically and intellectually in a state of utter decay, Marx stated: "This time the revolution begins in the East, hitherto the unbroken bulwark and reserve army of counter-revolution."²

¹ Marx, Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, p. 289.

² *Ibid.*

Marx hoped to live to see the Russian revolution. He and Engels were occasionally mistaken in their estimates of the time and proximity of victories of the proletariat, but these errors were not the result of a desire to "hurry up" the revolution. Such a Blanquist approach was profoundly alien to them. And Lenin was indubitably right when he wrote that "such errors—the errors of the giants of revolutionary thought ... are a thousand times more noble and magnificent and *historically more valuable and true* than the trite wisdom of official liberalism".¹

In the year when Marx died a gymnasium pupil from the distant Russian town of Simbirsk, Vladimir Ulyanov, was thirteen and had already begun to study revolutionary-democratic literature. By fifteen he had read Marx's *Capital* and he soon became an ardent propagator of Marxism and organiser of the revolutionary workers' party in Russia.

A new epoch in the creative development of Marxist ideas and their implementation, and at the same time a new epoch in the struggle of the working class for its liberation and the building of the world outlined in the *Communist Manifesto*, is linked with the name of Vladimir Lenin (Ulyanov).

If the 19th century was the century of the birth of the theory of scientific communism, then the 20th century has become the century of the new society, the century of the birth of a whole community of nations who are building "communism as completed humanism".

Socialism in our age is no longer only a great teaching. Socialism has become a reality in a whole

¹ V.I. Lenin, "Preface to the Russian Translation of Letters by Johannes Becker, Joseph Dietzgen, Frederick Engels, Karl Marx, and Others to Friedrich Sorge and Others". *Collected Works*, Vol. 12, p. 378.

number of countries which have united around the Soviet Union. Soviet Communists noted proudly at their 25th Congress that the hard work of the people has created a society the like of which mankind has never known before. It is a society free of exploitation, social inequality and all forms of the abasement of human dignity, a society with a smoothly and rapidly developing economy, where the constantly growing material prosperity of the working people is accompanied by a rise in their cultural level and an increase in their spiritual riches. A society where the working people themselves consciously direct all the social processes, guided by the scientific—Marxist—Leninist—world outlook, where the main aim is the all-round, unlimited development of the individual, the development of “all human forces as such regardless of any *previously fixed scale*”.¹

The development of the socialist countries, the growth of their power, and the increasingly beneficial influence of the policy pursued by them—the policy of peace and détente—constitutes the main trend in the social progress of mankind, the main trend of the world revolutionary process into which million upon million of working people from all lands are constantly being drawn, struggling against imperialism, oppression by the monopolies, and the colonial heritage, for peace, national independence and socialism.

In this struggle it is Marxism-Leninism which lights their path.

Bourgeois ideologists continue to do their utmost to “refute” and “destroy” Marxism. They seek to replace it with “isms” which are more acceptable to modern philistines, to emasculate it, to replace scientific socialism with the “liberal socialism” which

¹ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie*, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1953, S. 387.

Marx and Engels ridiculed so scathingly in their time.

We can see that all these efforts are in vain. History is inexorably advancing in the direction determined by Marx. The world communist movement is growing stronger and gathering strength.

In our dynamic age social and technological progress is proceeding at a particularly rapid rate. Almost each day brings reports of new political events of great importance and new scientific discoveries. Together with the progress of society, Marxist theory is also developing constantly, generalising new facts and opening up new horizons to the world. If philosophy and social research rest on their laurels and confine themselves solely to popularisation, they inevitably turn into their opposite—dogmatism and doctrinairism.

Marxism-Leninism is organically alien to stagnation. It does not cut itself off from life, does not shut itself up within the framework of a sectarian doctrine. Historically based on the generalisation and critical reshaping of the whole cultural heritage of mankind, Marxism continues to develop, absorbing the finest achievements of the human genius.

Marx's bold, creative, questing thought lives on and struggles in the world of today. It takes part in the work of the scientist, philosopher, and politician. It helps everyone to find his place in life and in the social struggle. It helps to rid the world of all social filth and scum, to rid mankind of wars, sufferings, poverty, hunger, and injustice.

It helps to make life on Earth worthy of Man.

The following profoundly accurate words of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, Leonid Brezhnev, were uttered from the platform of the 25th Congress of the CPSU: "Marxism-Leninism is the only reliable basis for formulating the right strategy and tactics. It gives us an understanding

of the historical perspective, helps us to determine the lines of our socio-economic and political development for years ahead, and correctly to find our orientation in international developments. Marxism-Leninism derives its power from its constant and creative development. That is what Marx taught. That is what Lenin taught. Our Party will always be loyal to their precepts!"¹

¹ *Documents and Resolutions. XXVth Congress of the CPSU*, Moscow, 1976, p. 87.

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